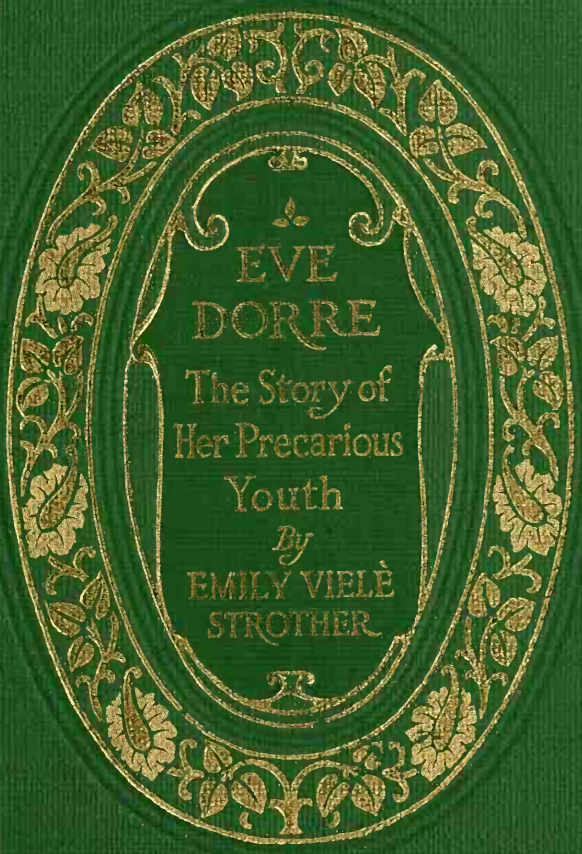
EVE
DORRE
The Story of
Her Precarious
Youth
By
EMILY VIELÉ
STROTHER

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# EVE DORRE

THE STORY OF HER
PRECARIOUS YOUTH

BY

EMILY VIELÉ STROTHER

WITH A FRONTISPIECE IN COLORS BY
GRACE COCHRANE SANGER

NEW YORK
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IN JOYOUS MEMORY OF
MY BROTHER
HERMAN KNICKERBOCKER VIELÉ

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# PART I

# THE CHILD

# EVE DORRE

## CHAPTER I

### "TAKE IT AWAY—IT'S A GIRL"

I WAS the seventh child of a most reluctant mother who said, when I was born, "Take it away, it's a girl!" A boy would have been the only alleviating circumstance in the stork's persistent visitations, which Mother looked upon as practical jokes, long having ceased to be funny, compelling her to retire from society, as a squaw lags behind in the march, carrying her papoose when she rejoins it.

Number six had been received very differently. He was born in war time at an army post, and at the news of the birth of the Colonel's son, the band, in a spirit of mischief, played "The Girl I Left Behind Me," at which nobody laughed more heartily than Mother. She had him wrapped in a flag and cradled him in a drum, and she christened him Jack Dorre.

David had been the first-born—then Majory

Dorre—then three girl babies who had died in different periods of infancy. Jack Dorre had come next and, last of all, my unwelcome little self. I have often visited my baby sisters in the old churchyard—a row of little tombstones, dainty and white as behooves them. Surely there cannot be tiny bones under them; just eternal, dimpled, sleeping loveliness; Mary and Jeanne, and last of the solemn row, the blue eyed tender Violette, hiding, as is her wont, under the damp earth.

"Take it away, it's a girl!" Mother felt that way about me for sixteen years, till some of her own traits, coming out in me, made me the inconsequent pleasure-loving companion that a boy could never have been.

At the time that the tiny stream of my life first flowed into the broad turbulent one of Mother's, she was a brilliant, dashing, society woman, surrounded by a small admiring court whom she kept in peals of laughter by her wit and eccentricities, entertaining lavishly, yet finding time for her children, whom she loved in her own strange way. Big-eyed, unkempt and adoring, they followed her, when she was at home, crowding into her small dressing room to watch her fix her hair, fascinated by her bril-

liant young beauty, her pretty clothes, and the delicious perfumes of her dressing table.

And, oh! the evenings when she read to them in her clear, beautifully modulated voice! She had a faculty of making it all so real. They knew and loved David Copperfield a thousand times better than the boy next door. The death of little Nell was their first great sorrow, and they donned their armor and rushed right gallantly to the lists with Ivanhoe. I say they, for I did not come in for all of this. I lay in my crib upstairs and if I should raise my voice and wail, as infants sometimes will who should be asleep, Mother would appear in the nursery door and say: "Hairbrush"—and the night would be still.

David, my eldest brother, was at that time the object of his mother's worship. Not very strong, with large blue eyes and golden curls, he had a whimsical humor and fanciful imagination that made of him always a being who attracted and held all who came near him. She asked him once, when he was very small—"What would David do if dear Mamma should die?" and he answered with twinkling eyes—"David would eat all the pie he wanted." Once, in a moment of impatience, she hit at him with the fringe of a towel, but in an instant she was

on her knees begging him to forgive her, while he, of the gentle heart, wept at seeing her so sorry.

As for poor Majorie Dorre, she died at fifteen, before she had lived. Her sweet short life does not belong in this story.

And then, there was my younger brother, Jack Dorre, whom Mother also doted on; he of the flag and drum; and no wonder, he was such a dear! A strange, serious, brown-eyed lad, as dark as his brother was fair. When he could barely toddle, his mother found him scowling at the jarring notes of a guinea fowl in the country. He ran to her in distress crying: "Why don't he 'have heself and talk right?" In after years as idealist and critic, he has vainly tried to find the answer to that question of his babyhood: "Why don't he 'have heself and talk right?"

## CHAPTER II

### FATHER

My baby recollections of my father are very indistinct. I should love to repeat some of the stories which have been told to me of this gallant soldier—but this is just a book of memories.

The splendid life-like portrait I have of him recalls to me some lines of Jean Ingelow's:

> "A mouth for mastery and manful work,
> A certain brooding sweetness in the eyes,
> A brow the harbor of grave thought, and hair
> Saxon of hue."

I also carry a portrait in my heart of him, the gentle, grave man who called me "Sister."

I used to crawl into his lap: "Father, where is the hair gone off the top of your head?" "It was shot off in battle, Sister," and of course I believed it. Every loving word that Father said to me sank deep into my heart.

In winter we lived in a brown stone house in a street in New York which is far from fashionable now, and in summer we moved to a ram-

shackle, rose-covered cottage in the wildest part of Westchester County.

We were not wealthy, but Mother always had a way with her best foot. Every now and then she would give a garden party at "Chetolah" (a misnomer, as it signifies in Indian, "Peace and Quietude"). The rough, Irish servants would be transformed by aprons, caps and ribbons into French nurses and would sit languidly on the lawn, with their over-dressed charges. Even the family had difficulty in recognizing the Bridget who had burst in at breakfast in response to Mother's summons, with, "Missus, did ye holler? I thought I heard a yell!"

Mother and Father were a strangely unassorted couple: he was the only creature who ever influenced her and she turned to him like a child, to get her out of the many scrapes caused by her impetuosity.

They had met at West Point when he was a cadet and she a beautiful girl of seventeen, who had gone there for the "Hops." It had been a quick, hot-headed affair among most romantic surroundings, and the engagement had been a short one; but the marriage had turned out very happily, notwithstanding many prophecies to the contrary.

And then, when I was four years old, Father died after a few days' illness.

All I remember is the sadness and stillness of death, Mother's heartbroken wails like those of a lioness mourning for her mate, and the black box being borne down stairs by staggering legs, also the unbearable odor of tuberoses and the aching void in my baby heart when the only person who had ever petted me went out of my life forever.

There seemed to be a long noiseless period after that. Everybody I met in the house said "Shsh" or "Hush." Once I crept uninvited into Mother's room. She was lying on a sofa in a soft wrapper, pale and wide eyed. The shades were lowered and there was a faint scent of roses and cologne. She did not see me and I crept out again.

## CHAPTER III

### YOU TWO AND WE THREE

Suddenly, all became bustle and confusion and preparations were made for a trip to Europe, where we were to stay indefinitely, Mother, Jack Dorre and I.

David, who had gone to Colorado a year previously in his capacity of civil engineer, and was now a slender youth of nineteen (just half of his mother's age) had been hastily summoned to his father's deathbed. Mother really *did* want to take him with her, though his six feet of boyhood contradicted the remarkable youthfulness of her pretty face, but his lungs and his soul were full of the free air of the Great West. He had only tasted the fascinating life of the pioneers and was impatient to get back. So he saw us off and must have felt alone indeed when the good ship *Saint George of Hull* bore his entire family out of sight.

She was a sail-boat bound for England and laden with rice with a wonderful figurehead of Saint George and the Dragon. I believe that

we took six weeks to make the trip; but, before the first week had gone by, there was mutiny on my mother's part caused by the too open admiration of the rough but impressionable skipper. She did not speak to him for the rest of the trip, which must have been more than awkward, as we were only five at the captain's table.

We had a glorious time, however, Jack Dorre and I. The first mate, "Blackguard Brown," was very good to us. He taught us how to drink hot grog, play cards and swear a little; he also cut down and sewed together some of his warm seamen's underclothes for us, for all of which I hope he has received his reward.

Most of Mother's phrases began with, "You two" or "We three." She apparently cast her past behind her as if it had never been. She was remarkably young-looking and her youthfulness was confirmed by the sizes of the only children whom she had to show. She went to Paris, took a handsome apartment, and soon collected around her an interesting salon of old American friends and clever people.

Jack Dorre and I would go every fine afternoon to the Champs Elysées with our *bonne*. It was well named, as no possible Elysium could offer greater joys to the young, and there we would meet French children, swarming from

every direction to this enormous playground, very prim, very neat and good, like the picture-children of Boutet de Monvel, carrying hoops and tops and whips, buckets or little shovels. Strange little boys and girls would accost us and invite us very courteously to play. They had sweet flute-like voices, and seemed to have no awkward age, no uncouthness of mind or limb. We would never miss Guignol where the immortal Punch beats his long-suffering wife, throws his baby out of the window, kills the Gendarmes, dies like a hero on the gibbet and is carried away by the devil; every day, all day, year in and year out, always the same old story, and always a crowd of excited, screaming children looking on;—the little house, the row of benches surrounded by a rope, babies on the front row, falling on top of each other in their merriment, larger children behind. Outside the rope, where we could stand and see it all for nothing, was our usual place—with ragged children and many grown-ups, who stopped to see the fun. Among them were always a sprinkling of *Pioupious,* with their blue coats and crimson trousers, and nobody laughs louder or longer than they do at the antics of the irascible, bad-tempered Monsieur Polichinel.

After consulting many people about our edu-

cation, Mother came to the conclusion that the first step to be taken should be to join the Roman Catholic Church, as all of the best schools in Paris were Catholic.

We happened to be in the picturesque old town of Boulogne-sur-Mer at the time that this decision came to its maturity.

So we had a triple christening in the grand old church, Mother joining in the ceremony, as a matter of superstition rather than conviction. Jack Dorre and I were much interested in the sprinkling of water and tasting of salt.

When we went to school we were very glad indeed not to be outsiders in the beautiful religious ceremonies, so well calculated in the Catholic Church to hold and charm the heart of a child. The gay little chapels with their myriads of candles, the uplifting odor of incense, the gentle Madonnas with motherly welcoming arms held out to children who are sometimes pining for love, and above all, the adorable Christ Child in the manger at Christmas. I hold all of these recollections in the holiest recesses of my heart and would not be without them.

## CHAPTER IV

### BADEN-BADEN

"Mein Kind, wir waren kinder."
HEINE.

WHEN I was nine, Mother became imbued with the advantage of adding German to our vocabulary. With her, it was always no sooner said than done; so off we started for Germany. She settled us in the ravishing little town of Baden-Baden, Jack Dorre with an eccentric old priest, who was to send him daily to the "gymnasium" and I in a convent near by bearing the cheerful name of "Holy Sepulcher."

I spent two happy years in this retreat and was soon able to knit stockings which I wore with much pride and considerable discomfort, as they scratched my legs dreadfully. I also acquired an unwholesome taste for sauerkraut. I look back with a shudder to pig-killing days and with another to the warm underdone "puddings" which followed, made of the congealed blood of the deceased, whose death squeals haunted me as I ate them.

My hair was brushed tightly back in a net, neatly surmounted by a black velvet bow on an elastic. A blue merino dress buttoned closely over my flat chest, with full skirts to the ankle, made of me a typically unbeautiful German girl.

When my gay and pretty Mother would suddenly turn up at the Hotel, she would send for me to join her. She would transform me by means of a short fluffy white dress, broad sash and dainty socks and slippers, doing wonderful things to my hair and touching it up with natural moisture to which I meekly objected.

They were like dreams, those short days on which I took my place in the crowd of pretty children, beautiful women and gay idle men who thronged the Lichenthale Allee and the Kursaal, drank the waters, listened to the music and gambled at night. But none gayer or more beautiful than my Mother; she had a trick of holding her head very high, like a race horse, tossing it in scorn, or inflating her nostrils in anger. I don't believe that anybody passed her without looking back at her dark beauty, laughing eyes, and striking gowns. There were generally two or three well-groomed men at her heels, making much of the child and cramming it with sweets, and I would play my little rôle of spoiled dar-

ling till it was time to go back to my uniform and my sauerkraut.

When I left the convent forever, it was amid many mutual tears of regret. I spoke German like a native, and was an adept in the gentle art of knitting.

## CHAPTER V

### UPS AND DOWNS

We went back to Paris, and my brother, entering college, began his brilliant career, while my education was continued by fits and starts, according to the condition of Mother's finances, which had their ups and downs. Husbands are often disadvantageous of course, but they are nearly always indispensable when it comes to managing the financial side of a household. It is mortifying to some of my sex to have to bear witness to the lack of business ability in some of the cleverest of women. Mother's beautiful house in New York, after having been almost ruined by unscrupulous tenants, was finally sold for taxes, and our income took a big drop.

The size, age and general appearance of our maids-of-all-work underwent remarkable changes from month to month. Mother had an uncontrollable habit of throwing things at them, especially shoes, which were in such handy reach of her bed in the morning, when there was anything missing on the breakfast tray. Very

few remained after the first missile was fired, except old Babette whom nobody else wanted, and no wonder, for she always had a drop on the end of her nose, which, apparently, never dropped,—but the thought of it and its possibilities interfered with my perfect enjoyment of Babette's excellent cooking. At times, even this worm would turn and be gone for days, and then I would have to help Mother with the household duties. She would laugh immoderately at my bedraggled appearance and dirty face and call me "The Marchioness." Things seemed very black to me at this time, I had not a single playmate, and was very much alone. Mother went to many dinners and balls and my evenings were very lonely. Sometimes when I heard a strange noise at night I would crawl under the bed and remain there shivering till the key rattled in the front door; but Mother never knew, and thought me fast asleep.

My life seemed mostly to be composed of contrasts. Even in those days of poverty, Mother would suddenly decide to give a party and Cinderella would not have to leave home to go to the ball. Waiters and good things to eat would appear as if by enchantment. My gay little dress would be produced, a little short, but still fresh and pretty, a hair dresser would curl me

within an inch of my skull, and the guests who arrived never dreamed that the dainty beribboned child had been helping with the housework a few hours since; and probably did not notice the small, red hands when they fondled and petted me. I would eat all that I could get and then curl up like a lap dog in the corner of a divan, and dream that I was freed from the enchantment of a wicked fairy, till I awakened in the dull morning light to find all the grand people gone and realize that I must go back to the hopeless monotony of cares beyond my age.

Cinderella's story never interested me; it seemed too true to life. I preferred the thrilling novels, which I would surreptitiously abstract from the book case and devour in the night, with rows of stars just where they were becoming mysteriously interesting.

## CHAPTER VI

### BROTHER AND SISTER

"He was the elder and a little man
Of forty inches, bound to show no dread,
And I the girl that puppy-like now ran,
Now lagged behind my brother's larger tread.

"I held him wise and when he talked to me
Of snakes and birds and which God loved the best,
I thought his knowledge marked the boundary
Where men grew blind, though angels know the rest.
If he said 'Hush!' I tried to hold my breath,
Wherever he said 'Come!' I stepped in faith."

GEORGE ELIOT.

WHEN Jack Dorre came home on his holidays, life took on a much brighter hue. Imperious, domineering, but warm of heart and full of magnetism, he had all the love I had to give and my slavish devotion besides. It seemed very natural to me that he should be Mother's idol.

Jack Dorre managed things with a high hand when he was at home. His first move, when the holidays began, was to purchase a supply of guinea pigs, enclose one end of the balcony in wire and build a house for them with his capa-

ble young hands, allowing me to wait on him, or assist in cleaning out their yard. This blissful pastime was often marred by tragedies, such as infanticide and even suicide, when an unfortunate guinea pig would slip outside the grating and precipitate himself into the street below, but what could you expect from emotional French guinea pigs?

We had full liberty to indulge ourselves in our passion for pets. I don't believe that Mother ever realized how we abused this privilege. We worked like beavers extending our animal kingdom. The narrow iron balcony ran all around the house, taking in nearly every window of our apartment. We enclosed about half of it in wire. The "Guinea-pig-sty" came first, then the rabbit house or "Lapinière"; this was followed by the "Turtleorium," where swarming turtles crawled in and out of a tin-lined pond. All had houses of refuge from the sun and rain. Canary birds lived, and died, in cages on the walls. We tried to raise little ones but were not successful.

Late one night Mother came home and woke me to tell me that a beautiful dog had followed her from a party where she had spent the evening. It was an Irish Setter.

The master's name, and that of his regiment,

were on the dog's collar, so we wrote to him, and in reply he begged us to keep and be kind to "Diane" as she was afraid of firearms, being a nervous female. Her name suited her well, however, for she was a huntress full of grace and beauty, but she would move around in this zoölogical hanging-garden with gentle, unsportsmanlike tolerance. Sometimes we would dress her neatly in Jack Dorre's trousers and roundabouts and send her down the back stairs to the street, then take a bird's-eye-view from the balcony of her antics and the sensation caused by her unusual costume.

But the most daring excess to which our unbridled love of pets carried us was the cat refuge which we opened in the seventh story servant's room belonging to our apartment. This room had been long unoccupied, as our servants were always of the char, or itinerant, variety. We collected cats from far and wide, probably depriving cherished pets of their happy homes. We bought them milk with our pennies and gave them all that we could safely take from the larder, till Babette having been openly accused of pilfering, we were obliged to give up that source of supplies. In no time this small room became a veritable Bedlam and a menace to the neighborhood. The cat fights were inces-

sant and the many servants who slept, or rather who passed sleepless nights up there, complained indignantly to the proprietor, who promptly made a raid on our "Catterie." We were forced to surrender the key,—the door was opened, and the air became full of cats dashing for their homes; and yet we considered ourselves as much wronged philanthropists. Mother was far from pleased at the disturbance. After that we were obliged to concentrate all of our cat love on the dignified Maltese who had an honorable position in our family. Raton was unusually large, had a well developed purr, when he ruminated, and was altogether a most satisfactory cat. At dusk we would open the back door for him, he would descend the six flights of stairs with uncatlike fearlessness and visit his large coterie of friends on a neighboring garden wall. French cats are denied the joys of back yard fences to be sure, as back yards are scarce in Paris, but who misses pleasures of which one has never heard? At a regular hour every night after we had gone to bed, Raton having no latch key would raise his powerful tenor voice on the back stairs landing demanding admittance. The first to hear him would obey his summons, having the joy of him as a bed fellow in conse-

quence. One night, as I was just dozing off, I heard the familiar nasal notes I loved so well, and they seemed even more imperious than ever. I sprang barefoot from my bed anxious to reach him before Jack Dorre did and returned in the dark with my arms full of throbbing fur. He seemed strangely restless, and as I tried to soothe him with tender cooing words a sleepy voice from the next room called out, "Who are you talking to?" "Raton of course." "You story! Raton is here in *my* bed." "Oh, Jack Dorre, how can you tell such a naughty fib, when he is in my very arms!" "Come here and look for yourself if you don't believe me, silly." I lit a candle and hurried to his bedside to find our beautiful gray brindled pet asleep sure enough in my brother's arms. Running back to my own cot, I beheld a large golden cat reposing on my pillow. Which goes to prove once more the old saying: *La nuit tous les chats sont gris.*

We would slip out after dark and buy provisions for our various pets. The small shops were open quite late and there was a delightful little street of them nearby. An unpleasant looking meat called "Mou" was always bought for Raton, who doted on it; and a sou's worth would last him a day. A bag of bran and in-

ferior cabbage for the munching tribe, a sou's worth of chickweed or Mourou for the birds and, for ourselves, five sous' worth of piping-hot golden-fried potatoes, generously sprinkled with salt, in a paper cornucopia, bought from the old woman on the corner, who proclaimed and advertised her trade, up and down the busy crooked rue Chaillot, by the savory pervading odor of her huge fry-pan.

Oh, what a blessing it is for a child to have all of the advantages that money can bring. Nobody knows better than I do how important healthy food and regular bed hours are for the young; and yet, sometimes, when I meet a well-groomed, well-bred child I can't help thinking: You are a delightful product of civilization, daily bathing and hygiene—your little heart beats with regular unemotional strokes; your clothes are *all* so pretty that you cannot appreciate them, not knowing what it is to wear old or ugly ones; your expensive toys are inanely tiresome; your over-paid nurses are unmitigated bores; you are not allowed to even touch a dog for fear of soiling your clothes; and oh, my poor dear child, you have never stood on a street corner in the dark with your clever little brother and eaten fried potatoes from a greasy brown cornucopia, clasping a

soft bundle of Mou to your heart while your dear dog pressed against your knees for her share.

Of course the little pauper envied the King and the little King envied the pauper—but how blissful to play the pauper and yet have an humble kingdom to return to.

We were not quite as neglected as these doings of ours might imply. Mother knew of them but she had such splendid faith in the judgment of my bold and fearless little comrade that she never gave a thought to me when he was home. And well did he deserve her trust; he had all of the exuberance and none of the waywardness of youth, his active mind never seemed to express itself in mischievous tricks and practical jokes like other boys; his earnest original way of talking, his extraordinary command of language acquired by serious reading (Taine was his favorite author at twelve) made of him a rare companion; it was a privilege to associate with him, and one that made up in some measure for my neglected education.

## CHAPTER VII

### BATHS AND TRAVEL

One of the most important and solemn events of our family life was the bath, ordered about once a month for the price of two francs. A wagon would drive up to the door, the body of it being a large copper boiler full of scalding water, with a spigot at one end, and a big copper bath tub on top. First, the tub would be carried upstairs over a man's head, like a turtle, then he would take the boiling water up in two huge buckets balanced on each end of a pole, slung over his shoulders. It generally meant about four trips to the sixth story, up a narrow spiral staircase. The tub would be deposited in the back hall and the last touch to the bath would be a bag of bran, to make the water opaque, so that the traffic in the apartment would not have to stop while the different members of the family were in soak. Mother would take the first bath, Jack Dorre would come next, then I and then the servant.

When Jack Dorre would be settled in his

branny water, I would come to the edge of the tub and tell him of the grievance which I had saved up against him. His modesty was such that I knew he would not dash out and hit me, I also knew his hot temper too well not to count on its being gone before he was dry and dressed. I cannot help laughing at the recollection of his dark cropped head above the milky water and the flash of his black eyes as he scolded.

This family bath was a universal French custom in those days before any of the inexpensive apartments had bath-rooms.

Jack's departure for boarding-school was always a tragedy to me. Of course I could go nowhere alone, and missed him every hour of the day. Babette's nephew, "Petit Pierre," was my only other associate. The child of a wayward mother, who had died of consumption, he was evidently doomed to die the same way. He had nobody on earth to care for him but his poor old aunt, who was away most of the time at five sous an hour; they lived in a wretched garret room in a poor tenement and he was too weak to go out in the street with the other children, so he sat all day by the small window, knitting stockings for them both. I took him a guinea pig and some books and he

was touchingly grateful—I would share their humble meal with them sometimes; it was served in courses in true French style—first Babette would fry a few slices of onions in a little lard on the tiny charcoal stove—when quite brown she would add some flour and water and pepper and salt, pouring it over slices of coarse bread in the tureen. The second course would be salad, "Capucine's beard" with French dressing and then an apple, peeled and sliced. The coffee, with milk and sugar in it, would be passed from mouth to mouth in a pitcher—first me, then Babette, then the consumptive lad, and back again to me. A merciful God watched over and kept me again and yet again from all evil. During those fifteen years in Paris, mother never sent for or called on a doctor. If either of us had a sore throat she would have us stand before her and say, "Ah-h-h," and, with a long glass tube, she would blow alum down our red lanes—this several times a day till cured. If we had pain under our little belts, mother would give us a lump of sugar soaked with spirits of peppermint; if a cold the hot mustard foot bath, red flannel cravat and scalding drink for us. I can truthfully say that we never had a day's illness, either mother, Jack Dorre or myself.

I was with "Petit Pierre" almost to the end, and his death added intolerable sadness to my solitude. I would bring out my old doll and lavish extravagant love and caresses on her, praying passionately to God to give her life, if only for a few minutes. Mother was not the kissing, caressing kind, and I craved just that sort of tender foolishness. One day a lady called, I shall never forget her sweet motherly face: her name was the Countess de Lamotte, and her shy little brown-eyed girl was with her. I took Marie to see my dolls, my birds, Raton, etc., and then, when her mother called her, led her back, her warm little hand in its thread glove in mine. It was my first glimpse of those who were to be my best and life-long friends.

When Paris became hot and dusty in the late spring we would go away on queer trips to queer places. Preparations would be made weeks ahead for the journey, all the necessities of life would be packed or put away in camphor. The gas-man would be sent for, ten days in advance, to turn off the meter. We would eat off of the end of the table with odd or rusty forks and knives. Our lights would be candles, stuck in bottles. We would sit uncomfortably on corpse-like carpets, rolled in their winding sheets in the middle of the room; the air was

full of certain pungent peppers warranted to kill moths and make humans sneeze. We seemed always to leave home in the gray light of dawn and mother, who was a late riser, was invariably cross at that time. We would pass the milk and market wagons on the way to the station and hang out of the cab windows eagerly to watch the droves of little asses, clattering along the street, with noisy hoofs and still noisier drivers, taking their milk personally to children and invalids—it was always a fascinating sight.

We generally arrived in the middle of the night, wherever we happened to be going to, after many adventures usually of an unpleasant nature. Once, on a homeward trip, during one of the long French pauses in a big station, Mother was standing up in the middle of our compartment brushing her long hair with a silver brush, the door was thrust open and a showy middle aged Frenchman stood on the steps looking at her with insolent admiration. "Oh, what a beautiful creature!" he exclaimed. I glanced timidly at Mother from my corner, trembling for the consequences of the man's temerity—to my surprise she was smiling a rather unnatural smile. She then slowly advanced towards him, hair brush in hand, and as he stood there leer-

ing up at her, he received a whack on the top of his bald head which sent him flying, making a prolonged sound like a hound. Oh, yes, Mother knew how to take care of herself.

Nobody ever carried so many peculiar things as we did when we traveled. One of the most distressing pieces of hand baggage which I especially recall, with a laugh from this distance of years, was a wire meat-safe full of shoes and loose sheets of music. The top one was entitled in large letters, *Tout à la Joie,* which seemed to afford much amusement to passers-by.

Jack Dorre and I took our personal treasures with us of course, one collection being a jar of jam and two live turtles in a small covered basket. When we entered the crowded compartment we put it tenderly in the net over the heads of an evident bride and groom. While we were going through a long tunnel in the dark, the air was suddenly rent with ear splitting screams. The excitement was intense and the rest of the passengers panic stricken, expecting to discover a bloody crime when we reached the light. What was our horror when we found that we were the innocent causes of the disturbance—our treasure-basket had fallen into the bride's lap, her pale gray dress was

covered with crimson jam, and one of the turtles was on his back on her knee. She had put out her hand in the dark to feel what it was and he, poor reptile, was lying there, with helpless, clutching legs, wildly waving in the air. A nasty thing to come in contact with unexpectedly in the dark, I grant you; but we never thought it either just or kind of the groom to pitch both turtles out of the window.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART

"Rosa mystica,
Ora pro nobis."
THE LITANY OF THE VIRGIN.

THE death of my maternal grandmother again caused changes in our finances and lives; the first and most important being my departure for boarding school.

I was provided with a suitable outfit and entered the Sacred Heart Convent, much to my joy and satisfaction. It was a little world in itself, this Convent; it practiced an ideal religion which was on so high and spiritual a plane that it could never have been attained in any other world. The two or three holy men who guided the pure and simple souls of its inmates were austere saints, such as the Roman Catholic Church knows how to produce.

Our teachers were all daughters of the noblest families of France, who had given up lives, well worth living, for toil, sacrifice and discomfort, inspired almost fanatically by their vocation.

All of them were charming and some were beautiful. One lovely young nun, whom I worshiped, had sacrificed herself in the hope of redeeming the soul of a dissolute old father. She seemed to me like a being from another world, half human, half divine, with her pure, peaceful profile and tiny tapering fingers. I would often wonder if a creature like that could demean itself by eating and could never even imagine her doing so material a thing. She would stand in the refectory during our meals, not far from my end of the table. I was so keenly conscious of her revered presence that I could scarcely eat, and three times a week, when prunes were served, I swallowed them, without chewing, rather than have her catch me in the vulgar act of emitting the seeds from my mouth. Fortunately, for me, appendicitis was not then in vogue, otherwise I should surely have had it.

The pupils were mostly of French nobility with a sprinkling of the royal families of Europe. The girl I loved the best was an Infanta of Spain. She was a beautiful child with her soft Spanish eyes, heavy plait of brown hair and gentle debonnaire manners. A little princess to the pretty tips of her fingers.

Every day we would sew for two hours while

the "Lives of the Saints" was read aloud to us, to which I listened with breathless interest. Solitude and loneliness had over-developed my imagination, but there was food for it and to spare in these extraordinary tales.

They read of one saint who, having been overfond of beautiful clothes, delicate perfumes and dainty dishes, left the world, when grace had come to him, and, in penance for his past follies, never washed or changed his one unpleasant garment and even went so far as to put refuse on his bread before he ate it; he died in the odor of sanctity, and his self abnegation and holiness excited my boundless admiration.

Then there was Saint Ignatius of Loyola, as brave and reckless as one of Dumas's Guardsmen; I would find myself regretting, in my secret heart, the change that grace had made in him.

But Saint Teresa was my favorite Saint. Young, beautiful, and ardent, her prayers were like songs of love and filled me with religious ecstasy. In one of these uplifted moods, I wrote secretly to the Superior of the Order of Carmelites, which Saint Teresa had founded, begging her to send me a bracelet of torture. I told her that I intended joining their commu-

nity when I was old enough and wished, meanwhile, to "mortify my flesh" in preparation for their holy life.

The Superior sent me the bracelet, and a wicked looking thing it was. Made of coarse woven wire with jagged ends on the inside. I wore this cruel instrument on the upper part of my arm. If my young blood had not been in such good condition the "mortification of my flesh" which I was so eager for might have set in with a vengeance and blood poisoning would have added my name to the grand army of martyrs, some of which, doubtless, were nothing but foolish exalted young things like myself, unbalanced by too much imagination.

One day, when I was wearing it, a nun suddenly seized me by the arm, pressing the wire in the inflamed flesh. I fainted, my secret was discovered and my treasure taken from me. Nothing daunted, I invented a new means of self torture; I had a small company of followers, whom I had worked up to a high pitch of enthusiasm. It seems to me that most of the time we would lose sight of the *raison d'être* of our great cause. We were far from model children, and only holy in spots, but we tried to outdo one another in torturing our small persons. My next invention was to crack nut

shells into little pieces and put them in our shoes. The hardest part to carry out was to walk without limping, so as to avoid detection; it was horrible.

Another of our tortures was to get out of bed in winter and kneel in prayer on the open register of a disused furnace, the cold air blowing through our night robes. Where was the fickle demon, pneumonia, that he should overlook such easy prey?

Confession was fraught with such an agony of remorse that it was almost unbearable. I would kneel in the little confessional to the kind old priest and tell him all my failings with scrupulous exactitude, choking with sobs of contrition and with tears rolling down my face. I would often wonder if the Magdalene had been as wicked as I.

One day a grand old priest visited the Convent in order to tell us of his work among the prisons; he had heard the last confession of many a condemned criminal. We all confessed to him that night, as the nuns considered it a rare privilege for us to receive absolution from such a saintly man. When my turn came, I recited my usual little list in tearful voice. I had "thought unkindly of a comrade," I had said half of a prayer without thinking it, I

had looked at myself with pleasure in a glass door (we had no mirrors), I had been filled with pride at my composition being the best in the class. Several times, in the darkness, I thought I heard the kind old confessor of criminals chuckle, but decided that he had a cold. The next day he carried us all off of our feet by the eloquence of his sermon. He spoke of his poor prisoners confessing their terrible crimes and receiving the Sacrament before they died, adding—"As for you, my little lambs, you might just as well have come to the Lord's table without stopping to confess, for there was not one of you with the stain of a real sin on her pure soul!" The nuns looked panic stricken at this broad statement, the girls gasped in wonder and I realized, for the first time, that Mary Magdalene must have sinned worse than myself.

My short-lived holiness came to a sudden end. My last effort in that direction was to induce my followers to give up the daily piece of chocolate which was distributed to them every afternoon at four, with a roll. The sacrificial offerings were to be collected in my desk and then slipped anonymously into the office of the Mistress General, for the poor. But one unlucky day, when everything had combined against me,

including my good angel, and I had received unmerited reproof, I felt sulky and dissatisfied with myself and in a mood for any crime. Seeing the chocolates I devoured most of them.

The remorse which followed this mean and dishonorable deed is too self-debasing to describe, and the only good that came of it was that I humbly realized that I was not "of the wood of which saints are made," and became a normal child.

The *bête noire* of my Convent life was my Guardian Angel. He was supposed to be always at my side, and always watchful of my slightest actions, smiling when he was pleased, frowning when I did wrong, and hiding his head behind his wing, like a sleeping bird, when he was shocked. I was ever nervously conscious of him and would do and say affectedly virtuous things in order to make him smile.

As for bathing, I can truthfully say that I never took a comfortable bath during the few years of his tyranny. Fortunately baths were an unfrequent occurrence in the Convent, and such preparations when they did happen! Elinor Glynn has described them so graphically in the "Visits of Elizabeth," that I have only to add my testimony. A special garment was provided for the occasion, long and loose

so that you could wash under it. The real trouble was to get in and out of this garment without offending the prudish but vigilant angel. I would stick out tentatively a bare foot so that he would get behind his wing and then rush wetly into my clothes. I was as modest as he was, and never felt sure that he was not peeping.

One day I burst out into measles and was bundled home after dark. Mother, of course, was not expecting me, but she was expecting a lot of people as she was about to give a party. She was anything but pleased to see me and gave me a good shaking by way of relieving her feelings. The couch which I occupied when at home was in a prominent position in the parlor. Mother had transformed her bedroom into a boudoir, the bed was in a deep alcove with curtains hung across to represent a large window; this was where she finally decided to put me, and I spent a wonderful night in my hiding place, peeping out at the gay assembly, overhearing conversations and watching the flirtations of those who paused now and then to talk in front of my curtains, also dozing a good deal. It was altogether a unique experience.

## CHAPTER IX

### LIBERAL EDUCATION

"And O that music! and O the way
That voice rang out from the donjon tower
Non ti scordar di me,
Non ti scordar di me!"

*Aux Italiens.*—OWEN MEREDITH.

WHEN I was nearly sixteen, Mother took quite a fancy to me, and removed me from school, employing different strange teachers to add scraps to my education. These scraps were wonderfully varied, as she quickly tired of her protégés. The most remarkable one was a destitute Armenian priest, who had brought letters to her. Jack Dorre, happening home at this time, we took a course of Turkish together of this kind and rather barbaric old man. One evening Mother, not being able to use a box at the Italian Opera House which somebody had given her, decided to send us with the Abbé. We arrived a little late, taking our seats in a large proscenium box. The opera was "Il Trovatore." The brilliant horseshoe which sur-

rounded us was like the one which Owen Meredith describes in "Aux Italiens."

I was simply dressed, and had a little seal skin cap on my head. Jack Dorre was in his college uniform, the Abbé sat in the middle, dressed in his long black cassock. The poor old man had not dined, as he loved to share his dinner with us, so after the first act he opened a large black cotton bag, which he had brought with him, and produced a long thin loaf of bread, three hard boiled eggs, a little package of salt, a bottle of red wine (with no glass) and some raw turnips. Jack Dorre and I did not quite like to eat before all those grand people, but we liked still less to hurt our kind friend's feelings, so we ate and enjoyed ourselves immensely, having been brought up in total disregard of public opinion. The description of this scene sent Mother into peals of laughter. She soon tired of the old Abbé, though, and sent him on his way.

He was a delightful episode in our lives and taught us quite a little Turkish. I look back with real affection to him and to the savory "egg-plant farci" which he would make for us, on his little gas-stove, when we visited his humble room. I cannot talk of that egg-plant without emotion. It was the work of a great artist.

It had sausage meat and garlic in it, and Jack Dorre and I would watch it brewing with reverence, and eat it with rapture. He would also make coffee which was a revelation and a thing never to be forgotten; a few drops of essence, so strong that it was thick, and all the rest, hot, rich cream.

I have heard of blotting your page with tears; but, if I continue on this subject, I will blot it in another way unless I keep my mouth very tightly closed.

Now and then when people annoyed Mother, some of the ensuing scenes would fill me with terror. One afternoon, for instance, just as Mother was preparing to receive the guests who always called on her "Day," the washerwoman arrived with the clean clothes; some of the garments were missing, and Mother refused to pay her bill till they were returned. The woman, who was a virago, announced her intention of sitting in the dining-room till she received her money. Mother thought a moment and then called to me, in a deep sepulchral voice: "Eve, bring me the big knife!" Never shall I forget the way in which that woman got out of the apartment! She was accompanied by a small child and a large basket, the back hall was long, narrow and very crooked. They got stuck sev-

eral times and the child kept screaming shrilly, "They wish to assassinate my mother!" The reception then proceeded with unusual success, as Mother was in her happiest vein.

Jack Dorre having finished his college career, and passed all of his examinations with befitting brilliancy, had taken a room in the Latin Quarter so as to follow the Law School and that of Political Science. My love and admiration of him amounted to idolatry. His visits were the most joyful events of my life. His fiery temper clashed with that of my mother in mighty combat nearly always on these occasions, without interfering in the least with her love for him; but to me, he was always the same gentle sympathetic comrade, and I was the confidante of his dreams of success, sitting up with him far into the night to listen to them.

Once, when I went to see him, I found that he had not gotten up, although it was afternoon. Most people get *down* when they get up, but when Jack Dorre rose he really had to get up. Something had happened to his slats (connected, I have no doubt, with an immediate need for fire wood) and his mattress was on the floor in the bottom of a large wooden bed. He was finishing a poem and smoking a pipe, his head protected by a brimless beaver hat, and a com-

ical figure he cut. Another time, when I came across him, aimlessly sauntering down the street, he said that it was the day on which the man always came to collect the rent for the piano, so that he did not care to go home.

On my sixteenth birthday in May, I suddenly stepped from childhood into girlhood, as a locust leaves its shell behind it.

Jack Dorre came early with flowers and wishes. I was expecting him and had put on my best dress, a forlorn little best it was, way above my shoe tops and very tight across the chest. My hair was braided down my back and tied with a bow of ribbon. Jack Dorre kissed me with unusual tenderness and then held me at arm's length, looking at me long and scrutinizingly with those kind dog's eyes of his. Then he called Mother and spoke to her with a certain calm finality he had which never brooked denial.

"I want you to go to the Rue de la Paix, Mother, and buy a dress for Eve which will reach to her ankles. I saw one on a girl the other day which would look well on her, with a kind of transparent white underwaist to it. Sister is getting too big to be dressed like a child."

And Mother went without demur and was

back in an hour with a box in her hand which she handed me. I took it eagerly and hurried to my room. Such an adorable little dress of soft silky material, palest blue, with, sure enough, an underbody of transparent mull and little straps across the breast. I had my hair up on the top of my head in a jiffy, with little curls popping over, and was dressed in no time. Then I stood and smiled and curtsied to the new Eve in the glass,—an impudent Eve who smiled back at me,—and somehow I knew that it would soon be my turn to live.

I made quite a sensation when I ran into the salon. Mother looked at me in a quick, startled way and said, "Why, I do believe that the child is pretty," and Jack Dorre said, "Of course she is pretty, Mother. I told you so long ago, only you would not believe me. Eve is a young girl now and she must have her share of happiness."

The blue dress is a family heir-loom now. I wore it when a friend of Jack Dorre's painted me for the Salon. A great artist said of the picture, "She has all of the wonder of youth in her eyes." I had it in my heart too, when I started for Spa in June, with my family and a trunk full of pretty clothes.

# PART II

# THE GIRL

# CHAPTER I

## FIRST LOVE

"Wer zum ersten mahl liebt."

I KNOW no more poetic setting for love's young dream than the exquisite little town of Spa, surrounded by gently sloping mountains and branching off into alleys of magnificent trees, where old Meyerbeer used to ride his donkey, dreaming great musical dreams as he went.

Afternoons and evenings we would sit and listen to the music, as we did at Baden, and watch the gay throng. Among it, I had noticed a beautiful youth, tall, broad-shouldered with curly, blond hair and uplifted conquering mustache. He would dart his eyes from right to left as he passed and repassed and sometimes they would meet the timid admiration in mine. I never can hear "Poet and Peasant" without seeing him pass again and receiving a slight reverberation of that first thrill.

A few nights after our arrival, Jack Dorre

and I were dressing, with excited anticipation, for a Casino hop. I put on a simple girlish frock of white merino, a little open at the neck, and, when I was ready, called Jack Dorre to come and see my gown. He looked me over, pipe in mouth, with critical, unflattering, fraternal eyes and, removing his pipe, ejaculated, "Too flat!" "Oh, Jack Dorre," I cried in mortification, "what shall I do?" He again removed his pipe and remarked, "Socks." In no time two pairs were found and stuffed each side of my loose waist, and a remarkable appearance I must have presented, the socks contrasting abnormally with the rest of my adolescent slenderness. Jack Dorre, however, was very proud of my figure when he took me into the ball room. It transpired afterwards that he had conceived a passing flame for a buxom lady of thirty-five who—did not have to wear socks.

I had almost finished the first dance with an awkward youth when a pair of socks popped out, unrolling as they fell. The next minute the handsome stranger of the promenade was handing them back to me with a military bow, one held limply in each hand.

"Pardon, Mademoiselle, are these yours?"

"Yes, yes—I mean no, no—that is—they are

the socks of my brother," I said in inane copy-book phraseology.

"Then they are not yours?"

"Oh, but they are. Please hide them quickly. My brother stuffed them in the front of my dress because he thought I looked too flat. I forgot to pin them in and so they fell out."

He stood for a minute with a puzzled expression, still holding the socks up helplessly and then a slow wave of crimson dyed his fair face. He had understood and I, who was quite used to unusual situations, only blushed in sympathy.

"Please, would you mind putting them in your pocket rather quickly? I can't put them back where they came from just now and I have no way of hiding them. Please hurry. They are so very blue and people are beginning to stare."

He complied at last and then bowed gravely.

"My name is Karl Schwenke. I live in Düsseldorf and belong to the X—— regiment. Would you care to dance with a man who has not had the honor of an introduction?"

"But you have just introduced yourself and besides you have been so kind in hiding those dreadful socks."

He winced at the allusion and never referred to them again, returning them later to Jack Dorre with much discretion. He then placed a large, strong hand in the middle of my back, lifted my arm as high as it would go and we whirled off madly, as only Germans can whirl, to the strains of the "Beautiful Blue Danube." The breathlessness of our performance put conversation out of the question. At last, we sat down to rest in a comparatively quiet corner and to make one another's acquaintance. As I look back dispassionately to this episode, I realize that Karl Schwenke's mentality was not his strongest point; but, as I said before, he was very beautiful. Like all men of his type his vanity was very susceptible and my innocent admiration of him must have been very apparent, as I did not know how to hide it.

"Did you see me yesterday at the promenade, in white, sitting beside my mother?"

"Of course I did. How could I forget those *wundershönen blaue augen?*"

When he found that I could speak German his interest became more personal. I told him of my happy days at the Convent of the Holy Sepulchre, of the nuns and of pig-killing day, but though he listened very attentively, he evidently saw nothing funny in the things which

I laughed at. As I talked, my soft French accent left me and the guttural tones of Baden came back,—my personality always has a trick of shifting when I pass from one language to another. Little by little I was able to draw his thoughts away from their favorite channel which was himself.

"And may I ask your name, *fraülein?*"

How could I tell him that my name was just plain "Eve"? It was not Eve who was talking to him, or even the French Eve with an accent on the "E," but I must speak or he would wonder at my hesitation. "My name is Gretchen—Gretchen Dorre."

"Gretchen? Where did an American *fraülein* get a name like that?"

"A German godmother, *mein Herr,*" I invented.

By this time he was more interested than I was and our acquaintanceship made rapid progress.

When Jack Dorre found us an hour later we were quite old friends and I introduced Herr Schwenke to him with no allusion to the unconventionality of our meeting. The dear, easy-going fellow asked no questions and was pleased in his eighteen year old boyishness to be treated like an equal by a man of twenty-four.

We parted with general friendliness and many pleasant plans for the next day.

Spa is wonderfully adapted to love-affairs. The same people run into each other several times a day and the everflowing crowd is a means of privacy in itself when lovers have things to whisper.

But we soon agreed that meeting in a crowd was not enough and decided shamelessly on early morning walks while the rest of the world was asleep.

I had always been a creature of the morning and my family was used to my way of slipping out of my room at dawn whenever we were in the country. They thoroughly approved of early morning air and exercise, but preferred to stay in bed.

I thought myself madly in love as we wandered hand in hand in the shady alleys of linden trees, listening to the twitter of birds and each other's foolish murmurs.

"Oh, Karl, look at that little fellow way up there! His throat is throbbing like a joyful heart. Would you not be willing to die if you could feel and sing like that if only for an hour?"

"*Ich liebe dich!*"

"Hush, don't move for a minute. There goes

a little squirrel. He has not seen us yet and is beckoning to his mate with his lovely tail. See, he has something for her, it must be a nut. They cannot have been married long or maybe she is just his sweetheart and he is trying to win her."

"*Ich liebe dich!*"

"Karl, Karl, will you be good to me like that when we are married? I must have nuts. I mean candy and books and a bullfinch in a wicker cage, and we will go and hear your beautiful operas, won't we? And I must have a large bright room to paint in."

"*Ich liebe dich! Ich liebe dich!*"

I would ramble on with my dreams of the future, not realizing that the things which I loved most in life meant little or nothing to him. And then he too would talk and plan. He would take me to his home—to his father, fat and jovial, who loved his merschaum pipe and his beer; to the *Mütterchen,* who made the best marzipane in Düsseldorf. They would love me and I would replace the little daughter whom they had lost in babyhood. The *Mütterchen* would make a splendid housewife of me. She would teach me how to knit new heels and toes in ragged socks,—it was wonderful how it made them just like new. Really, they lived very

well and spent very little. The old people were laying a lot away, and we,—we would be very rich some day and buy a little house and keep two servants. He loved to sit at the Hoffbraühaus far into the night and smoke and drink his beer. I should go with him and learn to like it as much as he did. Music? No—not in that especial place, but then the beer was better there than anywhere else in Düsseldorf.

Yes, he had fought a duel. Oh, it was a long story! The *kerl* had been extremely rude and he had felt obliged in honor to tweak his nose. He had done worse than that the next day and had left an ugly scar on the fellow's face, so that he would not soon forget him. Karl's eyes would flash like steel at the recollection and his upturned mustache would bristle belligerently. He seemed very brave and noble to me; but, somehow, I was sorry that he had felt obliged to tweak the other fellow's nose.

There was something which unconsciously depressed me whenever he spoke of his home and his people. The only picture which I could paint of the future was of the bullfinch in one cage and me in another, and I felt that the bullfinch would have to do all of the singing. And then I would look at the young god sitting on the bench beside me, with the sun playing

through the leaves on his face. It was the most beautiful face I had ever seen,—firm, clear-cut and square of jaw. The head was small, the neck thick and strong and set on broad, muscular shoulders, like the statues in the Louvre. What was it, though, that was lacking in those eyes, so clear and blue? Two deep, dark holes, such as sculptors make. Yes, that is just what they needed.

The time was drawing near for our return to Paris. Karl had written to his father and mother and both had sent loving blessings, with a note of welcome for me. They trusted their boy and knew that the *mädchen* whom he would bring home would be worthy of him and worthy of them.

The next thing to do was to tell my mother.

"Oh, no, Karl! I could never, never tell my mother. Don't ask me to do that. I would do anything in the wide world but that."

"But, *liebchen,* how can we marry if we do not tell her? She is so beautiful, she surely must be good and kind. If we tell her that we love each other, that surely will be enough, and then we could get married in a few weeks. My parents will come to Paris with me, and then—Oh, *mein evigliebchen,* we will take you straight home with us."

"No, no, Karl, you do not know my Mother. She would never, never give her consent, and, if I told her of our love, she would part us forever." He could not understand and it was impossible for me to explain.

There was no doubt in my mind as to just how Mother would feel about Karl as a possible husband. Our friendship had not passed unnoticed by Jack Dorre and herself and was the cause of much friendly banter. They were not ill-pleased with me for having captured the best looking man in Spa, but they looked upon it all as a tremendous joke. The hopelessness of Schwenke's passion was the most amusing part of it, and his mere name sent Mother off into peals of laughter. It was this attitude of indulgent pity towards "Eve's beau" which made it simply impossible for me to broach the subject to her of a serious engagement.

It was the day before our departure for Paris. I slipped out at the first streak of dawn, regardless of the rain, and found Karl waiting disconsolately under an umbrella in the accustomed trysting place. The first chill of September was in the air. The alley was very wet and desolate and the damp little birds peep-peeped sadly from their hiding places in the trees.

"What shall we do now, *meine liebchen?* You cannot go away and leave me like this, my Gretchen. You are all the world to me and I cannot live without you. The *Mütterchen* is waiting for you. All of the furniture has been recovered in red plush for you and the dachshund has a new collar just because my child is so fond of dogs. You cannot leave me, *hertzgeliebtest,* just as you have taught me how to live and to love. If your *gnadiche* Mother will not give her consent to our marriage you will have to run away with me. There is a train which leaves to-morrow morning at five. Meet me just once more at sunrise and I will take you to my Mother. We will reach her in a few short hours and she will take care of you while we wait for your Mother's consent. She will have to let you marry me after you have eloped with me."

I was very cold and sleepy and unhappy. I almost wished that I had never met him. Life seemed so complicated as I stood there, a wretched, bedraggled, little creature as forlorn as the wet bird on yonder limb.

Karl seemed very far away and the Paris of to-morrow was beckoning to me, full of all the new things which it had to offer to my awakened womanhood. But it seemed to me that

duty and honor bound me to this earnest, pleading youth with whom I had unconsciously played the comedy of love. I did not know then, that it was only make-believe, but I did know that truth and all of the deep sentiment of his race were in his face and voice as he spoke. He was asking me to do a thing from which my whole soul revolted: to spend the rest of my life in surroundings which were most distasteful to me, with him, this man who rarely laughed and loved beer better than he did music. And I said, yes, I would go with him. I would get up very early and we would catch that train. But how would I wake in time? He said I must tie the end of a long string to my foot before I went to sleep, leaving the other end hanging outside the window, with a stone attached to it, and he would come and pull it and that would wake me up. Then we would fly.

No, I would not stay any longer now. What was the use? I was very cold, and, besides, were we not going to meet to-morrow to part no more?

I moped through the day and went to bed early that night with a heavy heart, sleeping the sleep of innocence—the kind which needs a keeper.

I was aroused from the dreamless heavy

sleep of youth by a sharp pain in my toe; I quickly detached the string which was cutting it and, turning over, went straight to sleep again, thus missing the most romantic opportunity of my life.

When, later in the day, I dutifully accompanied Mother and Jack Dorre to the station, there was Karl, crestfallen and unable to even murmur a word to me in private, carrying in each hand a stiff bouquet in a setting of paper lace which he gallantly presented to Mother and to me.

Shortly after our return to Paris, Mother received from him a formal demand of my hand in marriage, written with many German flourishes, which she refused in very few words by return of mail, and I, after a few days of imaginary grieving, soon awoke from my first dream of love.

. . . . . .

Here, at the close of this almost humorous episode, I have a memorial tribute I wish to make to you, oh, Karl. A laurel wreath which I should like to lay on the rough mound which covers your body and those of the other missing who fell on that awful day at Ypres, only a few months ago. This wreath, if it were a real one, would look very strange, coming from such

loyal hands as mine, and would weigh nothing in the scales against the enormities committed by your people,—enormities in which I feel sure your gentle, upright spirit took no part.

This is my tribute:

In all of those dreamful summer weeks, when we wandered hand in hand under the linden trees, you never even asked for a betrothal kiss of the trusting child who was in your power.

Our engagement was not clandestine through any wish of yours and time and time again you pleaded with me to obtain my mother's sanction, without which you did not consider that you had a right to that first kiss.

I thought you very formal and very punctilious at the time; but now I thank you and I bless you on bended knees, for how could I hold up my head in times like these, or look my husband or my son in the face, if my lips had ever been branded by a German kiss? *

* This page was added after the completion of the MS.

## CHAPTER II

### IN THE WHIRL

Then followed a winter of feverish and almost continual pleasure, when night was turned into day. We often began the evening with a dinner, going to two or three parties and winding up with a ball.

Supper was generally served at five or six in the morning and it was a ghastly sight to watch the cruel light of day steal over the tired, painted faces of the older women; but I was only seventeen, and I took with me wherever I went such youthful joyousness and pure delight of living that I carried all before me. I was, at this time, the pride of my mother's heart and the butterfly which had burst so suddenly from the grub was a continual surprise to her. She never wearied of getting me pretty clothes or of inventing striking costumes for the fancy balls which were prevalent in Paris at that time. The attentions of the various little barons and vicomtes of my acquaintance were an endless

source of amusement to Mother and nothing pleased her more than my pertness to them.

We received every Sunday night. The young people danced and the old people played cards, poets recited their poems, musicians played their own compositions and those who had voices sang. No wonder French parties last till dawn. There is so much to do at them,—nobody is ever bored and nobody ever wants to go home.

Various striplings paid me timid attention, so timid and so respectful, in fact, that I could hardly have called them such had I not been assured by them extravagantly, in after years, that they had adored me.

A great many anecdotes are told by strangers of the immorality and general want of principle of the average Frenchman, but few realize how respectful his attitude is to a young girl. She is supposed to be an angel of purity and goodness and is treated as such and venerated as a being too ethereal to be made love to.

Much has also been told of the insults offered to women in the streets of Paris,—of dignified women being spoken to and followed if walking alone. Then, why was it that I, little waif that I was, had so few experiences of that kind? Perhaps it is because I was not given the fatal curse of beauty. I admit that a young French-

man is generally on the *qui vive* for adventure and many of them peer into the faces of every young woman whom they meet, in hopes of finding it; but when one passes, with modest indifference written in her face, even the most hardened nearly always move on.

When I come to think of it, it mortifies me just a little to recall the scarcity of my adventures. At a corner I once ran into a fat, middle-aged man who stood still, clasped his hands ecstatically and exclaimed: "She is my dream!" I trotted on quickly, smothering my desire to laugh. My only disagreeable adventure was with a nasty Frenchman who walked closely beside me for two blocks, talking continually in a most personal way, till I found and accosted a policeman. He then sauntered off in such an unconcerned manner that the policeman seemed to doubt my veracity.

Another adventure which I recall ended rather comically. I had bought some flowers for Mother from a woman with a handcart and when I crossed the street on a run, with my arms full of them, they slipped and fell at my feet. A dapper little Frenchman seemed to spring from the ground and picked them up. I thanked him and held out my arms to receive them back, but he refused to let me carry them, so off we

started, he conversing gayly while I planned a *dénouement.* When I reached the door of our house he handed me the flowers and I handed him ten sous, before he had realized what I was doing, then fled up the stairs.

I took lessons in recitation from an old retired actress and contributed my share to Mother's entertainments, reciting monologues written for me by her literary friends.

One of our gay inconsequent parties stands out in my memory. We had been invited to go to the Hippodrome and did not like to decline so pleasant an invitation just because we happened to be entertaining at home, so Mother confided the key of our apartment to a beautiful young widow who was one of our intimates at that time and requested her to arrive at ten, turn up the gas, receive the waiters and, if necessary, the first guests. She was very timid, but did as she was bid. The first time that the bell rang she opened the door to a mild-looking young man whom she promptly showed into the kitchen. He turned out to be a guest and refused to stay there, but sat with her silently in the salon for half an hour, being even more timid than she was. When we burst in, a gay and noisy crew, at eleven, rows of people were sitting around the room. Mother said it looked just like an omni-

bus station and thought it very amusing. But things were far from dull after that,—people arriving in groups from other entertainments till three in the morning—at which time a last detachment came in from a fancy ball. Henry the Fourth, in pale blue and white satin and silver; hunters in pink coats, and Jack Dorre as the Sultan of Turkey. The Vicomte de Blazé had just returned from a trip to New York and, after having sent a cab to his club for ingredients, made cocktails for the whole party. We gave him a white apron and he worked in the kitchen.

We had at this time a very handsome apartment on the first floor with large parlors and ceilings decorated with blue clouds and cupids.

I had an especially charming little beau, the Vicomte de Ravignan, the aforementioned Henri IV. He was undersized, but wore very high heels and had adoring blue eyes which slanted down at the far corners and a trim little pointed blond beard. His manicured fingernails were works of art and his favorite perfume, which he used in profusion, was "Peau d'Espagne." Just a whiff of that perfume now and then through the years has always had the power to bring back those mad nights. Unlike Karl, he was extremely witty. He had in his veins all that is finest in France, and underneath his ex-

ternal effeminacy there looked a fiery temper and a will of iron. He never asked me to marry him. Why should he? Nothing could have been more unappropriate than such a union; but, oh, what fun we had! Such dinners! Such suppers! And tickets to charity balls which he would send us, always swearing that they had been given to him, *parties carrées* when de Blazé was deputed to talk to Mother. I have often fancied other parties like that when de Ravignan in return entertained the mother of de Blazé's girl. I gave him up without a sigh when real love came my way and lost sight of him forever without regret.

## CHAPTER III

### CHÂTEAU DE CORMATIN

It was in July of that year that the de Lamotte family first entered into my life and as they became such an essential part of it and occupy a prominent place in this simple story of my youth I will describe them and their surroundings to the best of my ability.

The old Comte de Lamotte had long been an admirer of Mother's and an *habitué* of her salon before I had come on the carpet of it. He was a gentleman of the old school, the son of an academician, and himself a most talented poet,—a gentle, distinguished old man, so near-sighted that he attributed extreme beauty to all of the women whom he admired. He was the deputy of his department in Burgundy. His wife, who was a generation younger than himself, exchanged visits with Mother rather formally several times a year. When I came home from school I met the count, and winter and early spring combined in life-long friendship. He

was one of those who wrote poems for me to recite at Mother's parties.

The de Lamottes lived, while in Paris, in an old-fashioned apartment, Rue Saint Honoré, but their real home was in Burgundy, where they always hastened as soon as the Chamber of Deputies adjourned for the summer. When the Comtesse de Lamotte invited Jack Dorre and myself to spend ten days with them at their château we accepted with alacrity and started on the long railroad journey to Burgundy.

The mere freedom from conspicuous and peculiar luggage made this trip the pleasantest which we had ever taken. We were addressed as "Monsieur" and "Madame" and we tried to act the part.

We had the good luck to miss connections at Macon and were obliged to spend the night in the quaint old town, selecting from among the many omnibuses a rather shabby one bearing the (to our minds) fascinating inscription "Hotel du Sauvage." It clattered and rattled down narrow cobble-stoned streets and finally drew up in front of a picturesque dilapidated old inn with a dancing black painted on its sign. The rather unpleasant-looking landlord came out to receive us, his face contorted into what was intended to be a smile, and offered us a choice of

rooms in his apparently empty house. Jack Dorre chose one with a communicating one for me, as he did not want me to be out of his sight in this strange place. We had read a serial story in a daily paper very recently, called *Le dernier Gentilhomme* in which gruesome murders had been committed in an inn just like this one—and we shuddered deliciously as we prepared ourselves for dinner. Hush! What was that? Only the death squeal of a chicken who was probably giving his life for our repast.

We dined in a musty, empty dining-room, attended by the coach driver, and, after a tramp through the town, retired early, to awaken in the morning not only alive but unmolested.

To be sure we had to pay exorbitantly for our night's lodging; but what is money to those who are traveling for pleasure?

A short railroad journey to Cluny, lunch and a visit to the beautiful old Abbey, then a rickety country fly for the last ten miles.

I shall never forget our first ravished view of Cormatin, standing grim and massive among the poplars. We drove in through the gate and then for a half mile up the avenue to the clanging of the visitors' bell and over two drawbridges into the huge courtyard. There on the granite steps stood the tall, rather stooping

form of our host, with a gentle welcoming smile; beside him was his wife, still young and pretty; his fifteen-year-old daughter Marie, peeping shyly out from behind her mother with her father's dreamy, nearsighted eyes, and elfish thirteen-year-old Renée, who was neither shy nor dreamy. Lined up behind them were the servants, grown gray in the Count's service; (pretty Madame de Lamotte was his second wife).

The Count's appearance and manners were almost feudal. He belonged to a past epoch and made us all feel somehow as if we did too. His family unconsciously reflected his atmosphere. Modern customs, manners and expressions seemed so out of place in his presence that one eliminated them unconsciously and yet he was so gentle and simple and unaware of this influence that one hardly realized the strength of his personality.

There was even something undefinable about the servants which we had never noticed anywhere else,—a human expression of interest in their eyes,—the look of people who know all about you, have been expecting you and are glad that you have come.

The Count kissed my hand, his wife both of my cheeks, the girls saluted me as lightly as rose leaves fall in June and Jack Dorre was wel-

comed in a way which made him feel as if he were the scion of his race. We were then ushered to our rooms by two kind-eyed elderly servants, up a broad stone staircase which echoed to our steps, down a flagged corridor and into two adjoining rooms,—rooms of long ago,—great cool, sweet rooms with strange old beds and bureaus and dressing tables—quaint chairs and deep window seats. As soon as the door closed we rushed to one of these and peered down into the moat, and out, way out to the winding river and rows of poplars in the green valley below. Then hands in hands we dashed madly around in a circle.

"Jack Dorre, Jack Dorre! This is all happening before our last reincarnation but one. Do you suppose that the enemy will be so very obliging as to besiege us, just once before our visit is over?"

"They would have to pull up both drawbridges and fill the moats."

"Do you think it would be very difficult to fill the moats? You would be a hero and don that rusty suit of armor I saw in the hall. You would save the Count's life and in token of gratitude he would bestow on you the lily-white hand of his eldest daughter."

"I am afraid that you will have to do all of

the besieging yourself, little sister. You will take the hearts of the Count, the Countess, Mademoiselle Marie and Mademoiselle Renée, and when they are yours you will hold and keep them for the rest of your life. You see if I am not a good prophet."

"And you will marry the eldest daughter?"

"No, dear, that serious brown-eyed girl and I will never come together. Like does not seek like either in friendship or in love."

So wise and so old was Jack Dorre at nineteen.

I selected my simplest, my quaintest dress, with a fichu of Mother's old lace and gracefully flowing skirts, and we wandered down and found our way to the big salon where the family were assembled.

Marie was playing an ancient minuet on the quavering keys of the old harpsichord. A faint perfume of dried rose leaves was in the air. The Countess sat at her tapestry, which was a complicated thing of gay flowers stretched on a high wooden frame.

The Count was pacing up and down with bowed attentive head, listening to the rather ghostly music. When little Reneé saw us at the door she dropped the indignant white cat

which she was caressing and bounded to meet us. Then dinner was announced and we went in ceremoniously, arm-in-arm. The world seemed older and more beautiful every hour in this sheltered corner of it.

The girls of course did not speak at table. I had much to tell of the adventures of our trip, and exaggerated and made the most of our terrors for the amusement of my appreciative audience. The Count and Jack Dorre met on almost equal footing in the wide fields of literature. It was wonderful to listen to the boy in argument with the old man, and splendid to think that he was my own brother. Each recollection of him, each landmark of our common youth brings back the sensation of a heart swelling with pride of him. We left them arguing, comparing, analyzing and sipping old Madeira, and returned to the stately room which was soon ringing with the laughter of youth. And when early bedtime came the rose-leaf caresses were replaced by hearty hugs and we parted for the night, impatient for the morning.

When the fortnight was over and we spoke of leaving, a universal cry went up. They would not hear of it. Was I not part of the family now? Mother was consulted and gave me her

permission to remain,—but Jack Dorre had many things to do and to study and could not spare another day.

So I remained behind for the rest of the season, the willful spoiled child of the family, inventing pranks and surprises every day, which filled my new friends with easily inspired mirth, making the old halls ring with laughter as they had not done since Henri Quatre had filled them with his merry court, kicking up my heels like a young colt and catching up with life generally.

The Château de Cormatin was built in the beginning of the seventeenth century by the Maréchal du Blé d'Huxelles on the occasion of the marriage of his son with a Demoiselle de la Haye, from whence came the gallant device written here and there, under painted sheafs of wheat, in the wing called "the gilded apartments," *Bonne est La Haye autour du Blé,* ("Good is the fence around the wheat") and the other, *En tout temps du Blé* ("May there ever be wheat"). Evidently, punning was considered witty in those days.

Henry the Fourth had been entertained at the château. In the room where he slept a large picture represented him hunting with Tully and his lords, his equerries and his dogs. This picture has been bought since by the state and is in

the museum of Pau, the natal town of Henri Quatre.

There clung to the old château an atmosphere of times gone by. There was a delightful unreality about the gilded apartments and a certain mustiness which suggested ghosts,—ghosts in armor.

The great old kitchen, with its open fireplace, roasting broach and circular settles, seemed full of shadows,—quick, active shadows of cooks and scullions preparing feasts when royalty was expected,—substantial shadows in rough leather doublets, stout legs in long brown hose, running, bustling, shouting orders with a yelp now and then from a downtrodden dog. There was room in the fireplace for a deer or a lamb and many must have been done there to a turn.

But as I look back to the old kitchen through the mist of years I see real people—not shadows—more quaint, more interesting to me now than those dream people could have possibly been even to my girlish imagination.

"La grande Jeannette," the cook, held a salon there in her way with the ease and hospitality of a French hostess. Her word was law and she led and directed the conversation at such time and place as she deemed suitable. Although she was the soul of kindness, woe be

it to him or to her who soiled her immaculate floor. "La mère Letienne" was the laundress and washed all of the clothes in the little river Grosne, painfully but uncomplainingly kneeling in a wooden movable pen, on the water's edge, —beating, soaping, slapping with paddles and wringing all day long—coming home at dusk with a great bundle of damp clothes on her head.

They never spare themselves, these peasants. They never seem to be tired and most of them live to be very old. "La mère Letienne" was always ready to rest and chat when evening came. I thought her very agreeable. She had another duty besides washing, a rather incongruous one, for she raised all of the pigs for the château. To her, they were almost like human beings, of a lower order, however, for she never alluded to them without a preliminary, "Save your respect, Monsieur or Madame."

Philibert, the old coachman, came and went ponderously and with dignity. He had little to say, but what he did say was worth listening to, for his views on politics and religion were taken directly from his beloved master.

There was also Mariette, the capable nurse, who had been Marie's earliest friend on earth, very funny and very gay Mariette, far from young but far from old, always the same for

many years. And Philomène, the kindly maid, and Jean, the butler, born to wear side whiskers and pass things silently at table.

They must have had their faults, these people, and moments of impatience and other human frailties, yet there they stand and walk and sit in my memory, always gentle, always kind and always smiling.

On cool evenings when the work was done, the kitchen settles would be quite crowded and we children would slip in to share the conviviality.

Père Vautrim was a constant visitor. He would always be offered the best seat and a small glass of black-currant wine. He was a privileged character and looked up to for his erudition, for he had been decorated with the cross of Agricultural Merit and had composed a token of thanks for his deputy. It was a sort of picture, a kind of *ex-voto,* which represented the Cross of Merit and these words, formed out of grains of wheat, "Homage of Gratitude."

He had also been to Paris, Père Vautrim; had made the long twelve hours' trip on the hard seat of a third class carriage, just to hear his deputy speak. He had gone to the Chambre des Deputés, dressed in a clean blue linen blouse, clutching his fat red cotton umbrella in his hand

and the count had appreciated and rewarded his loyalty.

Sometimes, Pierrette Chaloyard would amble in and would be given a seat a little outside of the select circle. We were not a bit afraid of her there, surrounded as we were by our friends, but when we came on her suddenly in the woods, picking up dead sticks, we always ran away, for she looked so much like a witch. She was thin and gaunt and dried up, like an old pear. Her scanty, gray locks were tucked into a black cap, on top of which she wore on sunny days a stiff white cotton *coiffe* with flapping wings, such as the Burgundy peasants wear to work in the fields. Her bare, brown, thin, old legs looked so much like those of a chicken beneath her short sackcloth petticoat that we children always vowed that the feet concealed in her wooden shoes were really like chicken's feet. She was no mendicant, but always grateful for a cup of soup. Only once had she begged of Madame de Lamotte and that was for a fine white night-gown, as she had set her heart on being buried in such, and, of course, kind Madame gave it to her.

One dark night, when the Comtesse and Marie and I were pacing up and down on the terrace before retiring, our eyes were arrested by the

flickering of a light from window to window in a closed and uninhabited wing,—one that seemed to come from a candle carried by a person who was slowly walking through the rooms. Our first thought was of an intruder who had no business in that part of the château, so we collected some of the men and went up to investigate. The outside door was locked, so the keys were sent for and one was inserted with difficulty into the rusty lock. The men sprang in, the women bringing up the rear. All was damp and silent as the grave,—having been closed for years. The Count's only son by his first marriage had once occupied it with his wife and child, but having lost them both within a few days of each other he had gone away to distant lands and had never cared to come back. Massive wooden shutters were bolted over every window and no light could penetrate them. Nobody was there and there was no egress except through the door by which we had entered; and yet, as we had stood out there in the dark, all three of us had watched the lonely, restless light flit from window to window.

There were many interesting guests who came to the château for a few days now and then,—a Russian countess, of much charm and talent as a writer, who made a pet of me; a

great poet, second only to Béranger, whose songs throb with the heart of France. He told me that when I got married he would lend me a little shooting box which he owned on a neighboring hill and had not occupied for years.

My room at Cormatin was the same which had always been allotted to the poet Lamartine when he visited the Count's father. I would lie in the bed where he had slept and read his poems far into the night, hoping that his spirit would hover around me, as perhaps it did.

Some leaves of Marie de Lamotte's diary written at that time will complete the picture of those happy days, days in which I acquired health and strength with which to face the battle of life.

## CHAPTER IV

### JOURNAL OF MARIE DE LAMOTTE

"*October 20th,* 18—

"I HAVE neglected my journal lately, as I have been having such a good time. We have company at the château, two young people, a brother and a sister, Monsieur and Mademoiselle Dorre. Eve is charming, so gay and amiable, and we have so much fun together. Monsieur Jacques is very handsome and serious, but I am a little bit afraid of him. Eve will stay with us I hope till we return to Paris. She is nearly seventeen but seems younger than I am when she is in her merry moods.

"In a few weeks we will be leaving Cormatin, this place which I love better than any other on earth. The leaves are beginning to fall and soon the park will have lost its beauty. The wind is blowing and it is getting cold; but to me Cormatin is always the same, like a father who has sheltered my earliest childhood. I feel as if it was watching over me, this old castle, and often I throw my arms around the pink marble

columns of the front steps and embrace them. These old walls must have seen many things and will see many more, for it will be years before the castle crumbles away. Maybe children have lived here already who have loved it as much as I do, maybe there will be others to come. Cormatin! Oh, Cormatin, Paris seems like an exile to me! People do not understand my infatuation for you, but I do love you and like to think that your stones which I caress will remember me always."

"1*st of November.*

"Eve did remain with us. She is now as dear to me as a sister and I love her with all my heart.

"Yesterday morning I went to seven o'clock mass. When my dear Mariette came to wake me up it was hardly day, but when we left the castle the east was illuminated. The sky was palest blue, then slightly pink and finally yellow. The sun though it had no rays was giving a strange reflection and all of the shadows were very faint. In the village the laborers were leaving for the fields and a song was coming from the smithy across the way. Outside of the church little boys were playing while they waited for Sunday School. We went in. The

church was very dim and only two people were assisting at mass, a woman in black and the good old Pierrette Chaloyard, always in the same place near the holy water font. After mass we went home and I ran to the kitchen to get warm. A bright fire was burning in the deep fire-place and hanging over it in a caldron the good country soup was boiling. I sat down beside the fire inside of the chimney seat and listened to the caldron's song, first faint and then loud as the fire died down or as I revived it with dry grape vines, for I love to see the flames lick the caldron and I love the song it sings. I should like to describe the great kitchen with its blackened walls and somber bowlders. The old spit and the big table—very long with a rough bench on either side where the servants sit for meals—and where Mariette served me my soup, for I was very hungry. Then I went up into Eve's room. The little lazybones was just waking up and was stretching in her bed. I sat on it and told her all of my impressions of the morning and she said: 'Oh! my little sister, how happy you are!' "

"*Paris, November 19th.*

"I want to record here all the details of our departure from Cormatin—my dear Cormatin

which I have left for so many months. Before dawn on that day Mariette, faithful to her promise, came and woke me up. It was four o'clock. I had asked her to bring Djali, my dog. But when Djali saw that it was not her usual hour for being called she had refused to leave the warm kitchen so I went out in the hall and cried "Djali, Djali." At my voice she came to me with a thousand caresses. Poor beast, she surely understood that they would be the last she would give me for a long time. I was soon ready and when Mariette came back I was quite dressed and had said my prayers, as I always do, beside Mama's bed. Then Eve arrived, also dressed, and we went out together. Taking Djali with us we went down into the park. The night was cold and the grass covered with white frost, but the moon made everything as light as day. I took Eve's arm and we ran to keep warm till we reached the end of the big terrace. There we stopped beside the stream and gazed, spell-bound, at the landscape in the night. Oh, how beautiful it all was! The moon shone clear and bright through the bare branches of the lindens and was reflected in the quivering water. And on the other side in the opposite field the big poplars were mirrored also in the water. They looked as if they were reaching to the bot-

tom, and Eve said to me: 'How strange it is, little sister, that all that we are now looking at will in a few minutes belong to the past.' How beautiful it was and how calm. Such a glorious picture must always remain in our memories!

"Then we crowed like roosters. Eve imitates them to perfection and way off in the distance a cock answered us and we laughed just when we had been about to cry.

"But the cold was getting very penetrating, so we resumed our walk, going over all the long valleys with Djali running on ahead. I stopped for an instant near the little stream which separates the south alley from the 'field of the Jew,' where we had had such a good time this summer. In my heart I said a last good-by to this dear spot which we had crossed so often on stepping-stones and where we had caught butterflies and little fish. The stepping-stones were submerged by water and there were no more butterflies and fishes, but it was beautiful just the same.

"We came back to the house and warmed ourselves in the kitchen chimney-place while we waited for the carriage which was to take us to the station, two hours away—and Cormatin was over for a year."

# CHAPTER V

## PHILIP

"His frame for a sculptor might have served,
His hair over deep blue eyes and clear
Grew high on the temples ere it curved
In rich crisp gold round the shapely ear.

"And I think there are few things like his smile
Or his laughs, full mellow sweetness too,
And then in his own wild, self-taught style
He was clever beyond all men I knew."

The gayest balls in Paris were the Charity Balls. Most of them took place at the Hôtel Continental. The Fall I was eighteen I went to one which was given at the magnificent residence of the Duc de la Rochefoucault. Mother was getting tired of the rôle of chaperone, which had amused her at first, so I went with Jack Dorre, though according to French etiquette a brother's protection is not considered sufficient; but such small conventionalities never bothered either "us two" or "we three."

I wore a pale blue dress, draped in embroidered white chiffon and a crown of daisies

around my head. Young as I was I looked even younger, with bright excited eyes and flushed cheeks. I did not know what shyness meant, having been "out" all my life. I had realized only too soon that a girl could not have a good time in society unless she made herself attractive to men, and I deliberately strove to do so. My flirtations and rather pert manner amused the blazé dandies of that frivolous world.

I had a little court of my own and Mother's pride in my conquests egged me on to enlarge it. I had the field all to myself and no dangerous rivals, as well-bred French girls are not supposed to converse freely with men. They answer politely when they are spoken to and timidly agree with everything that is said to them. They sit demurely beside their chaperones at a ball. A partner comes up—

"May I have the honor of this dance?"

A quick glance between mother and daughter, an answering Yes or No from the older woman's eyes.

"*Mais oui, Monsieur*"—or else she is "Too fatigued."

If she dances with him the conversation is about the same each time.

"Have you had a gay winter, Mademoiselle?"

*"Mais oui, Monsieur."*

"Have you heard Madame Straus sing at the opera?"

*"Mais non, Monsieur."*

"Is not this a beautiful ball?"

*"Oh, oui, Monsieur."*

Then back again to the chaperone, a deep bow, *"Mademoiselle,"* a childish curtsey, *"Monsieur."*

They are danced with for duty, these little girls, and avoided as much as respected—and yet some of their pretty heads are full of clever thoughts, freely expressed when they jabber together.

I was French in language and in clothes and American in the way I made the best of these advantages, while my youth and obvious innocence protected me from misunderstandings.

This special evening I was airing my views to an appreciative audience of four or five grinning young *gommeux.* I was telling them of my plans for the future: I would never marry, oh no, men were so absurd, but I would have many children—four or five—babies were so sweet (shrieks of laughter).

Just then Jack Dorre brought up a tall young fellow and introduced him. "It is Philip de Bracy, sister; he says he wants to meet you."

As I looked into his clear blue eyes all sham seemed to drop from me like a garment and I blushed, vaguely conscious of the enormities of my remarks. I felt that none of my little tricks to please and attract would ever appeal to him and that I would have to be very true to my better self if I wanted this man to like me.

As he stood there before me, smiling frankly, as if he had known me all my life, I thought that there were few things which I longed for more than his esteem.

That was my last small triumph. I was never to be the belle of a ball again; but oh, it is nice to look back to.

And yet this was not love at first sight, such as you read about in books. I was too absorbed in this man's personality from the first to remember all that I had heard about love. He led me away in his masterful manner from the protesting partners of promised dances and took me to a retired bower of palms, and there we talked quietly to the strains of the "Beautiful Blue Danube." This waltz seemed to be my love-motif.

"What is your name?"

"Eve—and yours?"

"Philip. Jack Dorre has never told me that he had a sister. I have known him a long time

in the 'Quartier.' What an old dear he is. I did not think that there could be anybody else like him till I saw you."

"Oh, I am not the least bit like him, except in appearance—not nearly as nice, really—only I love him so that I imitate him unconsciously."

"That is for me to find out. You look as if you ought to be home in bed like the other babies, little Eve."

"You don't know what a wise old woman I am. I have stayed up late all my life. You don't look like a Frenchman, Monsieur de Bracy."

"My mother is an American. My name is Philip."

Then we talked in English which he spoke, like myself, without an accent.

He was an artist, still unknown, but his ambition was colossal and he had no doubt whatever of success. His father, a French nobleman, had run through two fortunes, his own and that of his wife. They lived in a small apartment where the thrifty American strove to make two ends meet, while the aristocratic old gentleman maintained his faultless attire, sported his white linen spats and swung his gold headed cane as he walked the boulevards—loafed at the "Jockey Club" or sipped tea in the salons of the

Faubourg Saint Germain where he was in much demand, both for his wit and striking appearance.

His wife was supposed to be an interesting invalid, as she neither paid nor received visits. In reality she needed all of her time and excellent health for household duties and could ill afford the clothes necessary for a society woman.

Of course Philip did not tell me these things that evening, but I saw that he cared more for his mother than he did for his father.

Then Jack Dorre joined us and the ball ended gayly, with the usual supper at dawn. Jack Dorre was pleased with the good understanding between his friend and his sister. We hoped that Mother would also like Philip.

He was a Bohemian by choice and had a bare little studio above Colla Rossi's Art School. He went hungry like the rest of them when his small allowance was spent. We were glad, however, that he was of good birth, as that would help a lot with Mother.

When we separated at the door of our apartment house in the broad daylight it was agreed that he was to call formally that afternoon in his best clothes.

"But, little Eve, I cannot wear my dancing

pumps and what, oh, what will your mother think of my best and only shoes?''

''I will arrange a chair for you, so that you can hide your feet under the tea table.''

# CHAPTER VI

## THE SPRING TIME OF LOVE

"Nul ne sait s'amuser comme les petites gens
Dont le repos rare a la gaieté plus franche
Je m'en vais anjourd'lui—c'est l'été, c'est dimanche:
Laisser mes pretendus plaisirs intelligents.

"Ma Mignonne, les nids vibrent de joyeux chants;
Dans le ciel enivré la lumière s'epanche:
Je veux par les blés verts suivre ta robe blanche,
Et cueillir avec toi de gros bouquets des champs."

FRANCOIS COPPÉE.

PHILIP came at the appointed time in shabby, well cut clothes, and his shoes—well, anybody with an observant eye could have seen that he was "down on his uppers." But Mother's pink silk curtains, especially devised for hiding the ravages of time, were equally lenient to inanimate things and made everything in their vicinity appear *couleur de rose.*

Philip's French wit and American humor captivated Mother in no time and his air of owning the world gave this poverty-stricken *rapin* a certain air of distinction.

Visits were never counted nor attentions commented on in this happy-go-lucky household; and Philip was free to come and go daily, if he chose—and he did.

He and Jack Dorre would call for me and we would repair to our favorite haunts, principally the Louvre and the Luxembourg, and Philip taught me the difference between what was beautiful or merely pretty in art.

I entered Colla Rossi's studio and worked hard every morning, trying to draw from the "altogether." It was slow and tedious work, but I learned there besides a profound respect and admiration for the earnest men and women who were plodding and striving after a too often unattainable ideal.

Then came spring—spring in Paris, which almost drives the artists mad. They flock out at dawn to the country with their folding easels, camp stools and paint-boxes. They crowd on top of the "pleasure trains," singing as they go. It is the call of the apple trees and of the first tender willow leaves—fleeting intangible effects of light and shade but infinitely desirable.

Of course Philip was among these devotees and I was up early and away with him while often Jack Dorre remained in bed, unbeknown to

Mother, who would never have countenanced these escapades *à deux*.

We would board a *bateau mouche* and go up the Seine till we reached the open country and then settle ourselves in some field and paint side by side, in foolish springtime rapture. Sometimes I would bring a small basket of lunch when I knew Philip to be more hard-up than usual—otherwise we would have lunch at a wayside inn. No danger there of being seen by anybody I had ever known. But I loved these dear people of France, merrymaking and picnicking with their families. The Parisians make no resistance when the country beckons to them to come. The very poor go on foot and the others in street cars or steamboats. The apartment is hastily put to rights in the morning and a substantial lunch packed in baskets. The table is set in advance for supper, the front door locked behind them and away they troop, father, mother, old people and children, also the maid of all work, if there is one, in ruffled cap and white apron. But the evening meal is not forgotten, as they know how tired they will be when they get home. They stop at a pastry cook's near by, leaving with him a raw leg of mutton with an appetizing piece of garlic stuck in it, here and there, with many instructions as to the

time it is to be roasted against their return, for the price of ten sous, and then they start on their light-hearted way.

They do not necessarily select a beautiful spot for their day's outing. They are quite satisfied so it is green and shady and, if possible, with a view of the highroad so that they can watch the other country seekers go. How well they understand how to rest and loaf and live! And when they reach their home at dusk, after miles of dusty walking, they stop for the roast, which is done to the king's taste, or better yet to that of the people, brown outside, faintly pink inside and juicy as mutton ought to be.

The head of the family bears it proudly under its tin cover, usually up several flights of stairs and puts it on the table where the bread and wine await it. And the hungry, tired children eat and fall into bed and the dreamless sleep of the happy.

But let me hasten back to Philip and to those never-to-be-forgotten days of springtime and of love.

Sometimes Jack Dorre would join us later in the day and then we would, all three, have dinner in the harbor of some little restaurant. There seemed to be so much that we, congenial comrades, had to talk about.

We took a friendly interest in the brides and grooms of that French spring. They were so funny! After going to the church and then to the Maire's office to be married over again (one cannot be married too often) they would make for the country. A bride of the people must wear out her nuptial slippers before night, in order to insure health, wealth and happiness. It is like a game of follow-my-leader. The wedding-breakfast takes place with much ceremony at some *guarguette* and the large table is generally near the road where all the people who pass may stop, look and listen; but they don't, for everybody is too busy.

Then, when the meal is over, the happy pair resume their walk, like the wandering Jew, with the rest of the wedding party at their heels, the better for drink, as these people never seem to have imbibed too much of the light red wine which cheers but does not inebriate.

The opening of the Salon, the first of May, was the greatest event of the year with Philip. He took me to "Varnishing Day," when only the artists who are exhibiting are admitted with their friends, and then we went again every day.

Philip's picture hung in a good light,—a little gray sketch of a rainy street in Brittany with

the solitary figure of an old woman half concealed by a blue cotton umbrella—not a thing to attract a crowd, but an art lover paused before it now and then appreciatively.

## CHAPTER VII

### REAL LOVE

And yet no words of love had passed between us up to this time. We were exhilarated in each other's company and happy, when apart, at the prospect of meeting on the to-morrow. Love as I had read about it was connected in my mind with melancholia, lack of appetite and rather delicate health generally. Mother had once remarked about a girl of our acquaintance: "She is either bilious or else she is in love—both afflictions have the same symptoms."

How was I to guess that I was in love with this exuberant creature, who kept me laughing most of the time I was with him and who made me feel as if I was walking on air?

If I had been older or more experienced in such matters my suspicions might have been aroused by my longing to be with him every minute that I was not and by the fact that he never was out of my thoughts, either sleeping or waking. But then I did not know, I did not know.

One day we suddenly discovered it—at least I did, for he always vowed that he knew it from the first.

I was coming down the narrow staircase of Colla Rossi's from the woman's studio, on my way to the street and he was ascending from the men's atelier to his own on the third floor. His smile was a little strained and he held a blood-stained handkerchief around his thumb.

"What is it, Philip, are you hurt?"

"Not much, a nasty penknife slipped while I was sharpening my charcoal. Come up and help me dress my thumb. There's a dear girl."

We went up together and I bathed and bound the strong clever hand with unsteady, awkward fingers. Man-like, Philip was quite concerned about his injury, especially was he afraid that it might interfere with his work for a few days. When I had finally bandaged the injured thumb, to our mutual satisfaction, I splashed a great tear, as an extra balm, on the dressing.

"Darling, don't do that. The old finger isn't worth it!"

And in his arms, I sobbed: "I love you so—I love you so."

There never was any proposal. The first love words burst from me in my pain and what he then said, I would not be Eve Dorre if I could

tell. Love like that does not come to all, but it does to some and those will understand.

There was a litter of pups in this untidy studio. The mother hound was a dear and Philip's personal property—but she had taken the liberty of bringing six children into the world in the Count de Bracy's apartment, from which she had been ignominiously expelled. This was the only place which Philip could bring her to. He had installed her in a large wooden box, full of hay and engaged the concierge to bring her food twice a day.

We sat on the floor to talk, there were no chairs, and we lived this glorious hour with soft unsteady baby-dogs crawling over us, sucking the buttons of my jacket, untying my shoe-strings and breathing the unpolluted breath of nurslings in our faces. The old concierge came in and went out again, but we hardly saw him.

And then suddenly the humor of it all struck us and we laughed and laughed till the puppies yapped in sympathy. The joke was indeed on us, for it would have been hard to find a couple less fitted for the holy bonds of matrimony.

The delightful calamity had to be faced, however.

Jack Dorre expected us to dine with him that evening at a little restaurant in the Quartier

which he had often honored with his patronage. We suddenly remembered this engagement and found that we just had time for the long walk. Jack Dorre had arrived ahead of us and he led the way to a little table in a comparatively quiet corner. He had acquired, after several disagreeable experiences, the precautionary habit of visiting his pockets before ordering a meal. On this occasion, search as he might, he could only find ten sous; he could not remember what had become of the rest of his money. Philip produced two francs with alacrity and I turned my little purse wrong side out on the table, thus adding three francs and fifty centimes to the collection. That was more than enough to buy an excellent dinner with, to which our young appetites did ample justice. Civet of rabbit which Jack Dorre declared to be cat—but it wasn't—no cat ever tasted like that with rich brown gravy flavored with wine which we sopped up shamelessly with our bread till the plates were clean, and crisp fried salsify in long slender strips, and *such* a dandelion salad, both tender and bitter. And slices of coarse fresh bread, *plain d'ouvrier*. Also a pint of pink, rather sour, wine, most refreshing in water.

When we had reached the coffee and cheese we told Jack Dorre the great news, with our

elbows on the table, and both talking together. He did not seem inordinately surprised, nor did he attempt to hide his pleasure. He went over to another table and borrowed five francs from a comrade, so that he could drink to the occasion in champagne, and he brought the comrade back with him. It was Grodet, of the Beaux Arts, whom we all knew and liked. It was only fair that he should have his share, as it was extremely improbable that he would ever see his five francs again.

Then we started home on foot. It was quite a distance, but we would not have taken an omnibus, even if we had had the money to do so.

Paris has a charm at night which never wanes. It had rained while we were dining, but the stars were shining now and the pavements reflected the gay lights. When I smell asphalt I close my eyes and live that walk over again,—hanging on the arms of the two of them,—keeping step and laughing as we went. Others passed us, mostly two by two, in the night. They also were laughing. Love nearly always laughs in Paris, and when it weeps, why, there is always the Seine, with its dark, quiet corners under the bridges, or, still better, a charcoal stove in a little garret room.

They both came in with me to see Mother.

It was only eleven o'clock and the night was still young enough for a visit. She was coiled on her divan, smoking, with that enigmatic smile which she always wore when she was alone and thinking. What wonderful thoughts they must have been to produce an expression like that! Thoughts of the future? Thoughts of the past? Who knows? But surely they never could have been thoughts of the present or of the girl-child who had reached womanhood and the glory of love.

She was never lonely and yet always glad of company and ready to offer certain hospitalities from a tiny room, known as the tea room. It was well named, as everything conceivable in the way of tea was in it. Even a framed inscription was on the wall, giving minute instructions for brewing tea, starting with the scalding of the tea pot. Elaborate English "cozies" hung up by their loops and a row of canisters on a shelf contained different brands of tea,—from the delicate flower-perfumed, imperial mixture presented by the Chinese minister, down to the savory, golden English breakfast tea which Mother smuggled from England herself. Tea-cups, large and small, thick and thin, lined the shallow shelves and tin boxes of seed cakes, fruit cakes and crackers occupied a

broader shelf of their own. Mother would chant: "Polly, put the kettle on and we'll have tea," and I would put a match to a tiny gas stove where a kettle always stood in readiness. I tried to suit the brand of tea to the quality of the guests, as any mistake of judgment would be apt to call forth a most embarrassing public rebuke. Our tea drinking hours ranged from ten to midnight, which sounds rather improbable, but was nevertheless so. There was apparently no prejudice about being kept awake, as I do not remember any of our friends refusing our refreshments for that or any other reason.

So we all had tea on this memorable occasion. Mother loved to be amused and we told her of the dinner which Jack Dorre had given on ten sous, and repeated to her some of Grodet's witticisms. But never a word of what was uppermost in our thoughts. We felt instinctively that the matter would have to be handled with much tact and circumspection, and trusted to time and opportunity to bring about an auspicious occasion.

It is hard to believe that a woman of Mother's age should have been so blind to the natural consequences of an intimacy like ours; but then, she had never loved anybody but Father, and

that was a long time ago. She had been singularly indifferent to the serious attentions of several suitors and though she liked men well enough she only cared for them collectively.

We parted as usual that night; but with, oh! such a difference in our hearts.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MY LADDIE

We lived in a fool's paradise for a while and forgot all else but one great incredible thing which had come to us.

Life only meant two things to me now: Philip and Art. The little vicomtes and barons had ceased ringing at the unfriendly door which no longer admitted them. Mother did not care for this change, but unsuspectingly attributed it to my new artistic departure and contented herself with the one visitor who was still allowed to come and who made up for the others by his high spirits and gay personality. Besides, she had many cronies of her own who kept things lively enough.

And then, one day, before we had summoned courage to speak, she walked into the doorless salon unexpectedly and found my head on the broad shoulder where it belonged. It was literally a tableau, as we were too scared to move for a few seconds while our irate audience contemplated us with wrathful eyes. Then Philip spoke up in all manliness:

"Don't be angry, Mrs. Dorre. Eve has promised to marry me. Please, please, don't scold her. I am very poor, as you know, and can't support her quite yet; but I am painting a big picture which I intend to sell to the Luxembourg; and, oh! Mrs. Dorre, I love her so."

But the storm broke on top of his breathless words and my bowed head. It was pitiless and devastating in its fury and ended in a quickly snatched kiss and the banging of the front door.

The memory of the dark days which followed is too sad for me to dwell on. It was almost solitary confinement for me, cheered only by Jack Dorre's fitful visits; but he did not come often, as he was in disgrace on account of the part he had played in our love story.

After dark, every evening, I would slip out on the balcony and a dim figure would arrive on a bicycle in the street below and lean against a tree for an hour. I would throw a little note down to it, but it was impossible to receive one in return, as the distance was too great for a missile. It was poor comfort, but better than nothing. Even this was soon denied me.

I was taken to Switzerland for the summer and rather enjoyed the rest from strife, secure as I was in my perfect trust and also comforted

by the daily love-letters which I called for clandestinely at the Post Office and tucked against my beating heart, to pore over in solitude.

There is no love so virulent as the love of the persecuted, so parents beware and be polite to the undesirable lovers of your daughters,—your chances for getting rid of them will be better.

It was in Lucerne that I met poor Bob Johnston, and liked him from the first with the same impulsiveness which characterized all of my friendships. He had lost both parents and one lung and seemed to have nothing belonging to him but a faithful valet and a large fortune. I never had a nicer chum. He was only twenty-one, fairly good-looking, scotch but not canny.

He was my daily associate and I turned to him selfishly in my loneliness for companionship.

One morning, when we were lying face downward on a bank, trying to catch bullfrogs with red flannel and a bent pin, he asked me to be his wife. It was proverbially sudden and I sat up and cried. I had never thought of ourselves as man and woman and had not cared to speak to him of anything so personal as my engagement. After that, our fun was spoiled. I went back to the hotel and told Mother. She

was very much put out with me and did not disguise her disappointment, as she had been living in a day-dream of late in which I figured as a rich and charming widow who would come back home to live.

The next day we left for Como and after Mother had retired that evening I went out and sat on a balcony overhanging the public square and idly watched the people come and go. The hotel omnibus drew up noisily and the only arrival who stepped out of it had a strangely familiar air. I suddenly recognized him and flew down to meet him and draw him breathlessly into a disused parlor.

"Oh, Bobbie, how could you follow me like this? Am I not unhappy enough already without your bringing me more trouble?"

I had him by the lapels of his coat and shook him roughly as I spoke.

"Oh, I say, little girl, let go my coat, there's a dear, and I will explain. I have not followed you just to annoy you or to make love to you. By the way, I never did make love to you, now, did I? I only want you to let me be your pal, as I have been for the last month. You are the jolliest girl I have ever known by far and I would like to be near you for just a little longer. We have had such a ripping time together and

there is no reason why my thoughtless words of yesterday should spoil our fun. God knows, I was lonely enough before you came; but when you went away, why, old Lucerne was simply rotten. So I thought I would just pop after you. I didn't mean what I said yesterday, at least, I did mean every word of it; but I didn't mean to say it. Is that clear to you? I knew it would be. You have a way of understanding a fellow while he is still hunting for his words. You see, this is how it is: I have nowhere to go and nothing to do except sit around and brood over what the doctors have told me about myself, not a very festive tale I can tell you, one lung which will see me through for some time if I live in high altitudes and behave myself. Oh, don't think that I mind behaving. I really believe that I would rather be decent than otherwise. As we lay there on the bank yesterday I was not thinking of the blooming frogs. I was just watching you and dreaming day-dreams. You had told me you were not happy; but somehow, I did not seem to be able to associate trouble with you. You said once that if God gave you the choice between a short life in the country or a long one in a town you would choose the shortest without hesitation. You showed me a chalet on the

hill and said that you would be content to live and die there. Do you remember? There was a bullfinch in a wicker cage hanging outside on the wall and you said that to own one like that was one of your most cherished dreams. Another time you told me that you wanted lots of money, so that you could spend it all on 'making little children happy.' All those things came back to me in my dream as you lay there laughing at the frogs. I imagined myself beside you in the chalet, part owner of the bullfinch, and I was pouring some of my useless money into your little hands for 'making little children happy.' I forgot the gruesome thing which I would have to bring into your life. It is hard to remember things like that when a fellow is looking at you. And then, when I blurted it all out, and you just sat there and cried, I felt like such a silly ass, and wished that I had bitten my tongue out before I had said anything to give you pain. You were gone before I could find words to explain and ask you to forget that I had spoken. But you will, won't you, dear, and you will let me amble along with you a little longer?''

And then I had to cry again. How could I help it? It was so pitiful to see him standing there at the dawning of his youth, talking so

calmly of death, a comely lad on the whole, very slender, but well put together. There was a brightness in his dark eyes and a flush on his slightly hollow cheeks that a doctor would not have liked; but otherwise he was a well-groomed, pleasant type of young Anglo-Saxon manhood. I had rushed down to beg him to go and then had forgotten everything else in my sympathy. Of course, it would never do for Mother to see him and that must and should be avoided. I told him as much as it was necessary for him to know and enforced secrecy and caution on him and then, for a week, we played a little comedy successfully which delighted me by its unusualness. The clandestine meetings of two young people who were obliged to elude the mother's vigilant eye and shamelessly deceive her, just because she had set her heart on their marriage. Bobbie put up at a little hotel the other side of the town which Mother, who was no pedestrian, would never be likely to pass. We spent two hours together every day, which was most reprehensible. Mother's siestas were very regular. When she retired to take them, I would slip out and saunter unconcernedly past Bobbie's hotel. A few minutes later he would join me, unostentatiously. We cast off all black forebodings for the present

and basked in the sunlight, and yet he could not have felt all the time as merry as he seemed, poor boy. Then came the eve of our departure and he came to say good-by when I had signalled to him from the balcony that Mother had retired. We went into the little parlor in which I had received him such a short time before. Good-by is sad enough of itself, God knows, but when each realizes it is forever the pain of it is unbearable.

"And I will write to you, laddie dear, and we will now make a pact that whenever people or things are particularly dull we will just close our eyes and think of the blue, blue lake of Como, and the lazy little boat and the lap—lapping of the waves against it. Stolen fruit is only best when it is sweet and sound, like the fruit we have stolen. Some day, when I am married, I will tell Mother all about this escapade of ours and she will laugh—she will laugh. Oh, forgive me, Bobbie! I did not mean to hurt you. There, kiss me good-by, dear, and never say that you are alone again, for have you not a little sister now who will always love you?" He kissed me very gently and then went out into the night.

Two years later, when Mother was in Algiers, she happened again across Bob Johnston. He

was staying in the same hotel and was very emaciated and very ill. His faithful valet was still with him. A few nights after that he sent for her and died in her arms—so sad and so small is the world.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

When we returned to Paris in the fall Mother did not allow me out of her sight a minute, even with Jack Dorre; but this watchfulness soon became irksome to her and I was allowed to resume my studies at Colla Rossi's with strict injunctions never to dare speak to "that man" again. Babette was always sent with me with orders to report any disobedience; but the poor old maid had been our staunch ally from the first.

Philip and I came together again at once, but we felt that we were sitting on a volcano. I did my work now in his studio and no master could have been more patient or more capable than he. Babette sat in a corner with her darning and beamed sentimentally on our love, the drop on her nose receiving fresh supplies from her emotional pink lidded eyes as she gazed on a happiness which could never have been hers.

But Mother, suspicious of my happy face,

came down on us one day as we worked. The scene was, of course, terrific and we felt that all was ended for us. Weeks followed of pathetic, hopeless despair and my career of art was cut short for the time being.

One day, the old Count de Bracy called on Mother and they had a long conference. They got on splendidly, as they were of the same mind on the subject of our engagement.

Then I was summoned. I had never seen Philip's father, and looked at him with timid interest.

He was a grand looking old man and a gentleman of the old school, notwithstanding his selfishness. He was full of prejudices and very ambitious for his only son whose choice of an artistic career was a great disappointment to him. He wished him to marry an heiress, and everything that stood in the way of this desire was an impediment, to be removed at any cost. He looked me over critically, this connoisseur of feminine beauty, and a sorry little figure I was to see. My face was never fashioned for sadness and my only claim to beauty lay in the brightness of my eyes, the dimples that only showed in laughter and the small white teeth which were now quite concealed by a drooping mouth. The bright color, which lends beauty

to even the homely, was quite gone and the gold of my hair had gone dull with grieving.

"Come here, little girl," he said. "Why, *sapristi,* I never knew that Philip was a cradle-snatcher! Stand right here where the light shines on your face. I want a good look at the cause of all this commotion. There, there, child, I did not mean to make you cry. So you think it is a very serious thing, this *Grande Passion* of yours. You are sure that your little heart will break and that you will never, never recover. Why, look at me, Mignonne. I have felt that way exactly five times; just identically the same way. They were charming girls, all five of them. Two have died since then, but not for love. The other three have been married these thirty odd years, about eighteen children among the three of them. Thank God, they are not mine! No, Bébé, undying love is for story-books only or *pour faire passer le temps—mais cêst le temps qui fait passer l'amour.* What, you would marry my Philip? Why, *petite folle,* you do not know from what your good mamma and I are saving you. If you did, you would get down on your knees and thank us. You don't know my boy, —handsome, yes, and very fascinating, I grant you. He always had a winning way with him

even when he was a very little boy, and there is little that his mother and I could find in our hearts to refuse him; but then, he never asked for the moon. The rascal, I can just fancy him making love. We de Bracys have always done that rather well. *Hé! Hé! Pauvre minette!* Just a dainty morsel for my greedy boy. Oh, you need not get pink like that. Of course, he was very fond of you and I am quite sure he wanted to marry you, *en tout bien tout honneur;* he is a gallant man, my son. But it was all a mistake, believe me, a very childish mistake. We must get him out of this, you and I, who love him. *Voyons,* I have come straight to you because I believe you to be a good child and I never care for round-about measures. Oh, no, it is much better to be quite honest. Philip is infatuated with this thing he calls his Art with a capital 'A.' All nonsense. It will pass, like his love for you."

"Oh, Monsieur," I sobbed, unable to control myself any longer, "don't say that. Philip may cease to love me, I admit, for I may not be worthy of a love like his; but he will never forget his art. How can you stand there in cold blood and say that your son will foreswear the gift which God has given him? Philip is a great artist. It may be I alone who know

it now, but in a few years people will point at you in the street and say: 'There goes the father of Philip de Bracy.' "

"*Tiens—tiens, voyez—vous cela!* The child has plenty of spirit. But that is neither here nor there. Philip is at this moment a shiftless extravagant *mauvais sujet* and I am here to protect you against each other. You two babies were never intended to marry. You are too much alike, it is opposites who get on best. Look at me and my wife. She is a thrifty housekeeper. She never interferes with my pleasures. I go my way, she goes hers, and we get on splendidly, *voila!* Dry those pretty eyes, blue eyes do not look well when they weep. That little face of yours might be rather pretty lit up with a few smiles and dimples. Go in for something worth your while, *Petite.* You ought to be able to do very well. There is nothing a man likes better than a *Greuze.* Innocence, either real or assumed, is always irresistible. You are getting advice now from a connoisseur."

Then, becoming more serious, he took both of my hands and asked me, with the ingratiating manner, which had served him for so many years with women, to give up his boy in order to prove my love for him. It was the same

old plea with the usual result. The same old situation, so dear to romancers, where the loving loyal woman is prevailed upon to give up the man she loves for his own good. There is but one course open to a proud girl under these circumstances and the Count de Bracy knew it only too well in his worldly wisdom.

Mother was delighted with the result of the interview and much elated at the turn of events. It all seemed very simple and final to them, for they could not see into my seething, suffering heart.

Something seemed to have died within me as I curtsied to the old man and went back to try and face a future without Philip.

Every night I sat for hours on the balcony, waiting for the shadowy form which never came again. I did not know that my poor boy had been sent to England, having been told that I had given him up and been taken to America.

I began to lose all interest in life and finally believed that my lover had forsaken me. Jack Dorre was on a walking trip in Switzerland and my wretchedness was unbearable. I never left the house without my mother and the letters which I had given Babette to mail remained unanswered and unmarked.

I decided that it was time for me to die and

that laudanum would be the means which would justify my end. There was a bottle of it in the medicine closet and I thought it best to drink all of it, as a small dose might take too long to act.

I remember my sensations so well in these last hours of my life, no fears, no regrets, nor even any sorrow.

The feeling that it would soon be over made me quite cheerful and dulled my pain. I leaned on both elbows in front of my mirror, gazed into my own childish face and thought it all out, the pros and cons, the nineteen years behind me with their few happy hours, the intolerable present and the hopeless future, and oh! the comfort of never getting old. It seemed very simple indeed.

So I poured the laudanum into a glass, bathed and dressed very carefully in a dainty morning dress of pale blue with pink ribbons. Then I read devoutly the offices for the dead. It did not seem as if I could be doing any harm. There were so few to care. Mother? Well, she had been the cause of all my anguish and would soon forget or even be glad that "the girl" had been taken away at last, even though it were nineteen years too late. Jack Dorre? Of course, he would be dreadfully cut up at

first, but then he had troubles of his own to worry him. Of the Other, I did not dare to think, and surely God would not be too hard on me, for I had been a good girl on the whole. So I gulped down the nauseous liquid, but the stuff would not stay swallowed and there was none left to take. I had absorbed enough, however, to plunge me into a heavy sleep.

My first conscious feeling was of being dragged hither and thither by rough hands. I was very sleepy and unable at first to open my eyes. Things came back to me as I stumbled along, the heartsickness, the hopelessness, the drug and my pathetic and untimely end.

"Fashioned so tenderly
Young and so fair."

But surely I was not being "handled with care." Why did they drag me so? Oh, why could they not let me sleep? Then I heard a rough voice:

*"Allons, du courage, Madame Dorre! Encore un petit tour et ça y est."*

I half opened my eyes and peeped at an unfamiliar face, two small glittering black eyes and a stumpy hairy hand rudely clasped around my tender arm. No, this was not Heaven, nor even so interesting a place as Hell. Just the

same old earth which I thought I had cast away forever. This must be the Docteur Parmentier, glimpsed now and then when he came and went on his rounds from the next house. I did not have to look to know that the masterful white hand which was clutching my other arm was Mother's. I glanced at her timidly, however. She was dressed in a flowing night gown (did anybody else ever wear such ample ones?) with ruffles and little blue bows all the way down to the feet. Her pretty night cap had left her in the excitement and her head was a mass of tight hard knots, so tight that they drew the skin of her forehead and scalp up with them.

They were forcibly walking or rather dragging me up and down in my own little room, trying to shake off the effect of the drug and waken me. When Mother saw that my eyes were at last open she said in a voice of unwonted gentleness:

"Never mind, she shall have her Philip."

My heart bounded madly, my brain reeled with joy; but my inert ungrateful little body was still incapable of showing any emotion.

Then they decided that it would be safe to put me to bed. Goodness knows, how long they had been working over me.

Hours or days of perfect rest followed and

then Philip came and knelt beside my couch and put his strong arms around me. They never asked me any questions or alluded to my despairing act and the recollection of it is as hazy as a dream.

## CHAPTER X

### DAVID

Madame de Bracy came to see me when I was quite well again. Gentle and colorless, she told me much of Philip's infantile diseases, first words and early habits, what he liked best to eat and how he preferred his mutton. Some mothers are like that, very unselfish but very dull. They experience no greater happiness than watching their children enjoy their meals. Philip's vitality and animal spirits sometimes almost frightened his mother. When he was little she had tried to teach him to sew. Poor soul, who would ever know what tragic experience marriage had given her.

Soon began modest but very absorbing preparations for the wedding. Action was always Mother's strong point. Her attitude now was that of an indulgent parent, whose only daughter was marrying a son-in-law according to her own heart. Nobody would have suspected the violent opposition of the past months, and I just laughed and forgot all past troubles,

basking in the present and in the heavenly, penniless future.

Just at this time we received a cable from David, the almost forgotten son and brother in the West. He was coming to see us and had just sailed for Europe. This was luck, as he would arrive in time for the wedding. Jack Dorre, especially, was beside himself for joy, as he at least had never forgotten the young hero of his boyish dreams. Our simple comforts would seem very grand to him after his rough experiences in mining camps. I fetched a letter which he had written me a few months before and we all reread it with renewed interest.

"My dear little sister:

"You asked me to describe myself; I am not quite six feet tall, my hair is light brown and I wear a short mustache. Is not that a graphic description? Oh, I see another question in your letter: 'Are you handsome?' How do you expect me to answer that? I shall only say that there are a great many worse looking men than your affectionate brother.

"If I were to write you all that I have been doing in the year past I would fill a book. I have been on engineering expeditions and slept in tents for months. I have surveyed for rail-

ways across the Rocky Mountains. I have been mining for gold and silver; ridden for miles on horseback through the Indian country, sleeping on my saddle under a tree; I have built log houses and founded what is now a flourishing city in Colorado. I have had command of a thousand volunteers when the miners threatened to burn the town I lived in. Once, I came near being murdered for parting my hair in the middle. It was a narrow escape! Once I came near being married. That was another narrow escape! In addition to all this, I have led the cotillon, written poetry (when I was very young), painted a little and read a good deal, and I suppose I have been in and out of as many scrapes as anybody of my age.

"Now I am sure that you will form a funny picture in your mind of your elder brother and fancy him as a sort of pirate; but I am not. I am rather a mild-looking person and not the least bit dangerous. The surprising part of my career is that I have never made any money. I suppose it is because I have never cared for it except to spend. I have had lots of chances but —well, I won't complain, for I have had on the whole a better time than many rich men.

"Write me a good long letter. I cannot tell you what pleasure it gives me to hear from you.

I like to fancy what our meeting will be like. Surely it will be a happy one.

"Your affectionate Brother."

And now he was actually coming—would arrive in a few days. We would hurry and finish the simple trousseau, as the apartment would have to be cleared of scraps and threads before David arrived. The wedding was only three weeks off, but we had no settled plans for the festivities thereof. First, would be the *Maire,* of course, who would legalize our love (jeers from Philip and Eve that a mere man should meddle with what God had put in our hearts). Then we would go to the Church of Saint Pierre de Chaillot and kneel before the good old Abbé Prévost and he would say beautiful things to us and lay his holy old hands on our heads and bless us. Oh, that would be very different. The altar was indeed a fit place to which to take such love as ours.

Before we knew it the day fixed for David's arrival had come. Jack Dorre had gone to Havre the night before, so as to be at the dock when the ship came in. Happy, impatient Jack Dorre!

Would the day never end? What on earth was the matter with the clock? Babette was in

a flurry, but accomplishing masterpieces. A little maid (suspected by Mother of pilfering) had been employed to assist, and when David should arrive at last, the whole apartment would rush to meet him in savory fumes.

After we had gazed out of the windows and even hung over the banisters till we were weary, and finally hurried back to the kitchen to attend to an almost forgotten but very essential detail, there was a violent ringing of the front door bell, followed by an impatient tattoo, and in strode my two brothers.

I held back a little, so as not to intrude on the meeting between mother and son; but it proved quite an unnecessary delicacy. But then, who could ever foretell the attitude of this surprising woman who was my mother? She and David exchanged a formal "peck" and her bearing was that of the Empress Eugénie. She was always like that under the stress of emotion.

The brothers were very much alike in broad-shouldered, long-limbed bodies, but very different in appearance. Jack Dorre had his mother's strong, dark beauty and David was fair, like his father, though he seemed rugged with sunburn and exposure and his eyes were as blue as periwinkles. He turned eagerly to the little

sister quivering in the background and then I was in his arms. It was fraternal love at first sight, coming with a wave of understanding.

Jack Dorre and he were old friends by this time and David had entered joyously into the spirit of the wedding. The breakfast was to be his affair he said,—just where and how "Sister" should want it.

I was a little disappointed in the clothes he wore. I had half hoped that they would suggest the cowboy; but instead of that he was dressed like any English gentleman. The wide-brimmed felt hat consoled me a little, however. How entertaining he was! What an utterly irresistible human being! I had never seen anybody like him. He had an extraordinary gift of expressing himself and could make you cry and laugh in the same sentence when he told of his adventures.

He had made a lucky strike which might mean a fortune and had come to see us with the first proceeds. There were others in his company and he guessed he could afford a short holiday before he buckled down to real work.

The West had not spoiled his rich, deep voice, but there was a clear ring in it, as of one used to talking in the open.

And oh, how splendid it was to see him eat!

Babette peeped through the crack of the door to watch him.

"Is this Heaven or only the French cooking which I have heard so much about?"

After dinner Philip came in as usual. He and David met like old friends and accepted each other as such at once.

The three big men made the little saloon seem unusually small and Mother was in her element.

She made herself as agreeable to her sons and future son-in-law as she did to her admirers and filled the room with her strong personality. Her toilet was superb for the occasion and she had piled her glossy dark hair like a coronet on her regal head.

She gave David the floor on this, his first evening, and he entertained us with his western adventures and hairbreadth escapes till we lost all count of the hours. At last my brothers had to go. Jack Dorre had a bed for David in his quarters and Philip had moved his studio to the same house, so the three went away together.

It was a tousled and happy Eve who came back from seeing them off at the landing, after much promiscuous hugging.

## CHAPTER XI

### LAST APPEARANCE OF EVE DORRE

Jack Dorre and I devoted the following week to sightseeing. David was our guide and introduced us to an historical Paris we had known little of before. His reading had not been in vain and for years he had been preparing for this visit. Philip was hard at work on a picture, the sale of which represented a year's income.

David made Jack Dorre take him to several *Jardins* and *Cafés Chantants* which the fellows out West had recommended. They were equally new to both of them, much to David's surprise, for he had imagined, as many other strangers do, that these places were the nightly haunts of all French students.

He very soon wearied of this pastime, especially when he was told that the couples who seemed to be having the most informally gay times were paid by the proprietor for every laugh and every caress, to encourage the American and English tourists to come again and bring their friends.

"Take me away, Jack Dorre. In the wild and woolly West we laugh and love when we damn please."

Then all hands settled down to the final preparations for Eve's wedding.

When David took charge of the wedding breakfast it put a stop to all arguments on the subject, for had he not declared that it would take place wherever Sister wanted it? He never called me by any other name than the one I had when I was a baby.

My plan appealed to him immensely; though he did not know that it was unconventional, nor did it bother him when he was told.

"What you say goes, Sister. You all invite the people and I will do the rest."

This is what I had proposed; a wedding breakfast at a vine-covered, rose-arbored inn at Saint Cloud, on the banks of the Seine, like those we had loved to watch when we went to the country to paint. I knew of a place so hemmed in with bushes and trees that it was quite private, and by having our party upstairs not a soul could intrude. Of course, it would be a breakfast of the people; but then who would care in this great, free Paris, which was deserted at this season, anyhow? Mother did not really object.

"Suit yourselves, children. It is not my funeral. I mean wedding, thank goodness!"

Philip and Jack Dorre considered it very suitable. Madame de Bracy was really quite shocked, but effaced herself as usual. As for Monsieur de Bracy he refused to even discuss it. If his son chose to be married like *la canaille* well and good, it was his affair, only don't expect him to demean himself by lending his presence or his countenance to any such performance.

The de Lamottes laughed till they cried when they heard about it.

"*Festin de noce en guarguette.* Ah! Ah! Ah! Another of Eve's mad-cap notions." No, they would not miss it and would all come up from Burgundy for the occasion.

So the boys engaged the hall, and David made all of his wishes known to the landlord, with Jack Dorre as interpreter.

And our wedding-day arrived, kind and fragrant and clear.

A real bride's dress had been tabooed as a useless piece of property. We had a life of work ahead of us for some time anyhow. But Mother had concentrated a good deal of her exquisite taste in the brown silk costume which was finally agreed to and which I put on that morning. It

was soft and iridescent, with gleams of golden yellow in the folds. A little ruffled cape was tied loosely on the breast. The brown tulle bonnet, trimmed with bunches of buttercups, framed my face like a cap, and my feet peeped out in bronze buckled shoes. A little like the traveling dress of Manon Lescault, perhaps, but then Mother was never averse to theatrical effects.

Philip came early with my brothers and we five drove to the *Maire's* office and went through all of the legal formalities incidental to our marriage. It did not strike us as a particularly solemn occasion. It seemed like witnessing a will or a consultation with a doctor. We were not at all impressed and did not feel the least bit married when it was over. Then we crowded back into the carriage and drove to Saint Pierre de Chaillot. David was astonished at the unimpressive approach to this beautiful and fashionable old church. Down the tortuous little Rue de Chaillot; past the corner, which we pointed out to him, where the fried potatoes of our childhood still sizzled and fumed; past creameries, fruit stores, vegetable and flower handcarts, till we finally reached and entered the dear, the solemn, the musty, old church, where I had so often crouched and prayed and crouched and wept. Quiet and empty it seemed,

till we spied a group of people up near the front —the de Lamottes, Madame de Bracy and three of Philip's "comrades" from the atelier—Auguste de Meaupon, Louis Rapin and Achille Dufour.

This was not the kind of a wedding where a rehearsal was deemed necessary. We just sauntered up and Philip and I knelt on two velvet cushions which were prepared at the feet of the old priest, while Jack Dorre stood beside us, ready with ring and sympathy, at least that is the only part of it which I remember. Of course there must have been a nuptial mass and a sermon. I did not feel shy or timid or the least bit like the proverbial blushing bride. There did not seem to be anything to blush about. We smiled into each other's eyes, then bowed our heads in grateful humility to the God who had been so good to us.

When it was all over we all filed in to the sacristy or vestry and signed our names in a great book and there was no more Eve Dorre.

We were soon driving merrily towards the Pont de l'Alma, where we were to take a *bateau-mouche* up the Seine to Saint Cloud.

I don't believe we looked like a bridal party, just a crowd of rather well-dressed merry-makers. Mother, at our insistent request, was at-

tired simply, for her, but the ultra stylish, dark blue cloth suit hardly toned down her imperial carriage and vivid face. She looked like royalty traveling in disguise. She was born conspicuous and the eye of the public was always on her. She expected it and would have missed it had it been otherwise.

She sat with the Comte de Lamotte in the stern of the boat. They delighted in the thrust and parry of each other's wit, and in these clever battles the courtly old count always managed to be beaten.

Dear, sympathetic Madame de Lamotte was lending an attentive ear to Madame de Bracy's endless chatter, with no signs of weariness on her kind face.

Marie and Renée sat close together, hand in hand, for the first time in their well-regulated lives the center of a circle of young men who were trying to outdo one another in witty foolishness for the girls' amusement.

Marie would make a low-voiced, intelligent remark now and then, followed by a quick blush at her temerity, which would be caught and responded to by Auguste de Meaupon, whose artist's eyes were feasting on the Madonna-like beauty of her face.

Then fifteen-year-old Renée would burst out

with some naïve drollery which would send them all off into shrieks of laughter and cause a nervous but indulgent glance from the watchful mother.

The two brothers had endless things to say to each other and Philip and I sat among them all, smiling benignly like Darby and Joan. Somehow, we felt as if we had been married a long time.

When we reached Saint Cloud we all walked to the little inn as hungry a bridal party as it had ever sheltered.

The obsequious landlord received us, cap in hand, and ushered the ladies into a room where Babette was in waiting. She was deeply moved and her cup of happiness must have been full,—indeed, it appeared to be overflowing, judging by her expressive nose. She had graced the occasion with a red cotton handkerchief which she must have found most useful.

When we were ushered into the banqueting hall we seemed to be entering a fairy bower. Who but an American would dare conceive and carry out the priceless simplicity of such a transformation? The whitewashed walls and ceiling had first been entirely covered with green trellis and then a vast profusion of fresh roses and vines had been trailed all over them. Some-

where in concealment a stringed band with a predominating harp was playing village dances and old French ballads.

A long table down the center of the room was banked with roses and set in gay country china which was to be ours afterwards. Four pretty waitresses, dressed in pink, with dainty caps and aprons, stood ready for the fray. Six French windows opened out on a broad balcony hung in flowers, and summer and the song of birds rushed in without restraint.

David watched me as I stood spellbound, taking it all in, and seemed quite rewarded when I rushed into his outstretched arms.

Just as we were all about to sit down somebody discovered that though the table was laid for fourteen there were only thirteen present.

Surely we must not, we dare not tempt Providence by such an imprudent act. What was to be done? Who would be self-sacrificing enough to sit at a side-table?

As we stood hesitating the door was suddenly thrown open and the stout host announced unctuously:

"*Monsieur le comte Alfred de Bracy!*"

My father-in-law walked in, cool and stately, with the manner of one who, although belated,

was yet in time. He came straight to me first and raised my trembling hand to his lips. It was our second meeting. He then saluted Mother with equal gallantry. They met like two great European powers. A slightly patronizing bow to his wife and graceful obeisances to the de Lamotte ladies, suggesting red heels, snuff boxes and things like that. Then we all sat down. Philip and I side by side at one end of the broad table and Mother and the Count de Bracy occupying the other end. I whispered: "Philip, did you have any idea that he would come? How fortunate it is that there was a place for him!"

"You see, dear, he had said that under no circumstances would he sink so low as to breakfast at a *guarguette* and thus encourage such an outlandish performance by his presence. So then I told David that he would be pretty sure to come and that it would be safe to set a place for him."

Surely no happier bride than I had ever visited this wedding caravansary.

Then there were speeches—and there were toasts. Sweet Renée, just to carry out the pretty popular custom, stood up and recited a piece. The Count de Lamotte had written it

for the occasion. It was all about the marriage of Cana and the bride and groom whom Jesus had loved.

How well the warm-hearted, clever child had entered into the spirit of my mad fancy, which was just to be married like those who are closest to nature and the simple life, eliminating from the occasion all of the formality and conventionality which were never to take any part in our lives.

A course of frogs was passed around. They had retained their shapes of grotesque human slenderness and David jumped up to speak.

Frog-eating had been the only distinctive characteristic which he had ever heard attributed to Frenchmen out West and he wished to see them on their favorite job (loud hisses). Then followed some graceful remarks on his own personal impressions of the French, and a subtly flattering tribute to France flowed easily from his silver tongue.

Cheers for the host! *Vive l'Amérique!*

The Count de Lamotte responded in pretty stilted English and we all knew that only a great and civilized country could produce a man like him.

*"Vive la France!"*

At dessert a musty bottle of the Count de

Bracy's brandy (*fin champagne*) was mysteriously produced from somewhere, and with it the health of the bride and groom was drunk.

"*Vive les mariés!*"

The two old noblemen entered into a political argument; both were becoming quite heated. The comrades were getting a little foolish, especially Louis Rapin. But such things are treated with indulgence at a wedding in a country where real drunkenness is practically unheard of socially.

It was time, anyhow, to move on to the gingerbread fair which was the next thing on the programme, so we all adjourned to it on foot.

It was funny to see Mother and the Count de Bracy stepping airily from booth to booth and examining the tawdry tombola prizes through their lorgnettes as if they were strange specimens; but funnier yet when we all got in the huge revolving wheel in odd pairs, and the machinery got stuck and Mother, who was suspended in midair in company with the Count de Lamotte, screamed angrily to be let right down. I sat at the very top of the immovable machine beside my father-in-law who had stepped in beside me when I entered. We could see nothing but the sky above us and I felt chilled and frightened, alone up there with the cynical old man.

He took my hand: "Do not tremble so, little Eve. There is no harm that I can or wish to do to you. I did try once to help you but then I failed, and now it is too late. You have taken matters into your own small hands and though you look very little and frail I believe that you have plenty of pluck. You will need it all. You have spent your life in the shadow of that remarkable woman, your mother, and she has obliterated your personality up till now. Strike out for yourself, my child. I do not ask you to be good to Philip. We sometimes hate the women who are good to us. Lead him a dance if you choose and can, but for God's sake don't bore him; that is the one thing which we de Bracys cannot stand."

"Count de Bracy, I will love Philip with all my heart and if I ever find that I am boring him I will go away."

Just then the machinery started up again and the wheel swung around, letting out its laughing passengers. Mother was far from amused, however, and told the man at the gate just what she thought of him, and it was anything but complimentary.

I don't think that I have ever seen a human being enjoy anything as much as David did that

day. He spoke pleasantly to everybody in English, raising his voice to penetrate their apparent deafness, and roared with laughter at their bewildered faces. They would laugh back at him, as nobody could ever resist his cheerfulness.

The time arrived for the parting of our ways. When we got back to the boat landing the sun was already sinking, with a last glimmer on the river. The young men were laden with tombola prizes and loaves of ginger bread. The older women were tired and the girls excited and happy. This had been the merriest day of their uneventful lives and they would never stop talking of Eve's wedding.

They all clustered around us and bade us good-by in characteristic fashion,—blessings, words of love and cheer, kisses and just a few tears.

Mother showed no emotion, but she gave me a perfunctory kiss on the cheek, telling me to be sure and put my brown silk dress away very carefully and pin a piece of paper over the little bonnet when I took it off.

We stood and waved to them till the steamer went around a curve in the river, then hand-in-hand went down a path through the woods.

We had a mile to walk before we would reach the out-of-the-way inn, where our supper would be waiting for us in a little sandy-floored sitting-room.

# PART III

## THE WIFE

"Oh, give us, crowned in youth with marriage glory,
Give for all our life's dear story,
Give us love and give us peace."

JEAN INGELOW.

# CHAPTER I

## HANDS ACROSS THE SEA

We only spent a week in our retreat, as we did not want to miss any more of David's short visit.

Philip had much to show him.

There was no room for us in Mother's little apartment, so we joined the boys in the rambling old house, Boulevard Saint Michel, where there was always more space than comfort.

We initiated David to a phase of Parisian life which he had never heard of. Mother's friends gave parties for the bride and groom, and although some of these entertainments were very conventional, others were more interesting and typical of a Paris which foreigners rarely ever see.

We would drive to out-of-the-way streets in the quarter of the Faubourg Saint Germain and climb up narrow, badly lighted stairs,—sometimes to the top floor. But what a change from darkness and gloom to light and conviviality, when the door would open to our ring and a neat

maid would show us into a gay scene of music and laughter.

The apartment would generally be furnished with rare old things and the walls hung with good pictures,—relics of better days.

The hostess would receive us like the duchess she sometimes was and the elegance of her deportment would more than atone for any lack of it in her apparel.

The refreshments were never very elaborate: little rolls with a layer of *pâté de foie gras,* dry cakes, a tiny glass of Madeira; but then the "feast of reason" was always plentiful.

Mother would generally sail in, rather late, in point lace and diamonds, very much at home. There was no age limit, and older women than Mother received the homage due to their wit.

Elderly gentlemen made polite efforts to converse with David in almost forgotten English.

"Tell your mother I was sorry not to see him when it was here," said one, and David bowed gravely.

All too soon the day for David's sailing came, and he left us, like the sun does when it goes behind a cloud.

But there is never any real parting between those who love—no forgetting of people who are always in our hearts. When we think of

them we live over the happy days which we spent together, till kind Fate brings back again more of such days to live and to remember. Surely he would come back!

When he had "wished" a gold bangle, made of a nugget from the mine, on my arm, I knew that he was thinking of our next meeting. I can hear his clear, rich voice:

> "Here's hands across the sea,
> For the best of friends are we.
> While life shall last
> We'll clasp them fast,
> And the best of friends we'll be!"

And if he should not come back soon, or often, or ever, why his mad, gay spirit would always come at our call. Some few are like that. A flash of memory and they stand before you, every dear feature brightly distinct even after many years. You find yourself smiling in their faces and your lips moving in reply to their unforgotten, cheery words.

Ah, no! He did not come back. It has burst from me with a sob.

He did not come back,—at least, not in body, but those few short weeks had given me a joy which Fate could never take away. His vivid, joyous personality is a thing that can never die while those who love him live. It will stay

with me till my own journey's end, and then, please God, his strong hand will be held out to help me when I stumble over the border to that other world where one meets to part no more.

## CHAPTER II

### HOME

The poet had again offered us his shooting box in Burgundy and we did not hesitate to accept it, as he had not occupied it for years.

It was rather inaccessible, up on a hill and out of repair; but full of possibilities for us two city-weary lovers. A small, massive, stone house, four rooms and a shed of a kitchen. An outside ladder led to the servant's room under the low-hanging eaves and a pump would provide all of the clear spring water that even we could desire. We would also have a tiny vineyard with its yearly product of good red wine. What a place to paint and to love in, overlooking the poplar-bordered river Rhône and the Château de Cormatin, whose windows would glance up at us like the bright eyes of loving friends and whose great doors would be open to us, like the hearts of its inmates.

I was going to help win our bread by painting cupids. I had a way with them and they sold so well.

Mother was full of clever suggestions for the improvement of the "Hermitage." We drew a plan of it for her, but her ideas for its comfort were far beyond our slender means. We were quite satisfied to confine ourselves to necessities.

We finally departed for Burgundy and our first home with happy anticipations.

The de Lamottes were to have us at the Château while we made our nest habitable.

We arrived after our twelve-hour trip at the dusk of a lovely day in early June.

A large assemblage was at the station to meet us,—the Count, the Countess, Marie, Renée, Monsieur le Curé, Doctor Dubois and many village friends of my girlhood.

We were soon packed into the coach of state, known as "l'Américaine," amid shouts, handshakes and kisses, and hurried up the road to Cormatin, so as to arrive before the darkness. But when we reached the Château gate and the lazy horses tried to turn in, old Philibert admonished them gently with an indulgent whip and drove them up the hill to the Hermitage. Our shower of questions was only answered with laughter and we saw with surprise lights in the windows of our future home and smoke curling upward from the stocky little chimney.

The carriage drew up in front of the tiny portico with the dash and sudden stop which Philibert always affected on visits of ceremony and there stood old Mariette, bobbing and curtseying on the threshold.

We all jumped out and crowded into the tiny house. But, oh, what fairy hands had been at work and what miracles had they not accomplished! The living-room, into which the front door opened, with its big stone fire-place, dainty muslin curtains and table set for six, looked as cozy as if it had been occupied for years, and there were flowers everywhere.

Beyond was a bright little bedroom, all chintz and white paint; then another tiny chamber and a studio full of windows and dear familiar objects,—Philip's pictures, his easel and mine, scratched and stained and full of memories; also, several treasures of my girlhood, unpacked and put into place by loving hands. Roses were climing up outside and peeping in at the diamond-paned windows, and hanging in one of them was a bullfinch—a bullfinch in a willow cage—mine at last, after all these years of waiting! That was more than I could bear. I just sat down and cried,—cried as if my heart would break for joy.

Mr. de Lamotte blew his nose. The kitchen

fire must be smoking. Philip went out with him to attend to it, and the three women cried a little with me as we kissed and hugged and hugged and kissed again. Then, we all went to look at the little kitchen. It was no longer a shed, but a real room with a spigot of running water and a row of bright copper sauce-pans. We found Mariette dishing up the dinner, so we trooped gayly back and sat down to table.

We had everything to eat that I had ever liked. One of the tenderest attentions of affection is to remember and serve a favorite dish after a separation. It seems a simple thing to do, but only those who love you remember what you liked best to eat.

First, came the time-honored soup of Cormatin, pumpkin *au lait;* then a dish of veal, sliced, dipped in batter, fried crisp and served hot, with French dressing. The third course was potato croquettes, small and brown like sausages, and sprinkled with sugar; then hearts and hearts of artichokes, winding up with *riz à la Créole,* an idealized "poor man's pudding."

Oh, people! This may not sound especially good to you; but what of the things which you loved to eat when you were very young and very happy and very hungry.

Such a merry party as was crowded around that little table! Such holding of hands and kissing of them! Such friendly toasts drunk with Monsieur de Lamotte's oldest wine! The first of all was to Mother, for was it not she who had planned and made possible the whole wonderful surprise! It was she who had bought and sent all of the pretty furniture and drawn the more than willing de Lamottes into the conspiracy.

Then they all said good night when old Philibert and the coach came for them. We could only press their hands. No words seemed adequate to express our gratitude. Oh, the dear people! They had given us Mariette, pretending that they no longer needed her. They said that she was just the one to care for two such babies because she was such a splendid nurse.

"Philip, pinch me and then I will pinch you. No, we are not dreaming. Is this lovely place our really, truly home? Is this I? Is that you? I did not know that one could be so happy. Heaven must be a very tame place compared to this beautiful earth. Philip, dear Philip, God has been so good to us. Would you mind very much if we knelt down together and said a little prayer?"

And hand in hand we knelt and prayed with grateful hearts till old Mariette looked in, then softly crept out again as she crossed herself in sympathy.

## CHAPTER III

### MARRIED LOVERS

THERE, in the little house, our married life began. "Is that you?" "Is this I?" we asked for the last time that night. This had been the refrain of our honey-moon; but now we understood that love and life were realities at last—ours gloriously for the taking. We knew little of each other as man and woman. Like Romeo and Juliet we worshiped in one another all that youth and love stood for. The persecution we had passed through had only strengthened our faith and produced the exaltation of which martyrs are made. And now we stood on our own little hearth, the man and the almost-woman, partners in life's most serious contract, with no capital but our infatuation. We did not realize it then; but it was a critical moment for both of us, this entering into every-day, practical life together. All future happiness would depend on our finding the same level when we had stepped down from the high pinnacles on which each had placed the other.

We had no preconceived ideas of matrimony and no example to follow, as I had been practically fatherless and Philip had been raised amidst domestic infelicity. That did not bother us a bit, however. We thought ourselves the only living perfect married lovers, and maybe we were at that time.

The first day we spent like Robinson Crusoe did, reconnoitering our belongings and placing them conveniently for our use and comfort.

I hung over Philip as he unpacked his trunks and pounced upon his socks. I was disappointed at finding them new and holeless, as I had conceived a tableau of an industrious young wife, busy with needle and darning-gourd, to the edification of an adoring husband.

I found Philip's razor very interesting (Jack Dorre always used scissors). It looked so temptingly sharp that I tried it on a pencil. How strangely the thin steel crackled as I whittled. As soon as Philip realized what I was doing he made a rush to save his favorite razor and I burst into tears when I saw the expression of horror which sat so strangely on my lover's face.

"Don't cry, darling. I will write to Mother to send me a new one. I did not mean to look so cross, my angel. I was just a wee bit startled

to see my old familiar razor presenting the appearance of a buzz-saw."

The second day I was to materialize a plan that had been one of my most cherished dreams. Oh, happy Eve, the realities were pouring in, outshining and surpassing all preconceived moving-pictures of the heart!

Quick, it is four o'clock. Get up, you sleepy heads, there is not one minute to lose. The sun is almost risen, the birds are going stark mad for joy.

The next minute the little house is shaking under quick young footsteps. Soon, there is a mighty splashing in the wood-shed, from which Philip presently emerges in tweeds and thick-ribbed stockings, blond hair on end, face aglow and laughing eyes. Eve is ready too, not so noisily clean, but fresh and rosy in her white blouse and short corduroy skirt, a trifle conscious, perhaps, of her high-booted not unshapely legs and much more wide-awake than the soft brown hat which crushes her unruly curls.

On the table are two bowls of steaming soup *au-lait,* in appetizing blue and white bowls, covered with childish designs of impossible birds and flowers. Mariette is as active as if it were noon, bustling around with strange moth-

ering grunts, performing imaginary services.

The dream? Why, just to take Philip in the old flat-bottom boat on the Grosne at dawn; to make with him the cruise I had made so often alone; to show him my old haunts and introduce him to the willows and the poplars; to breathe with him the indescribable perfumes of the morning and then at a certain bend in the river, to drift and feast our eyes on the changes in the sky over there beyond the grim old château which I loved.

It seems a simple dream, but it is of such trifles that love is made. I wanted to go over the landmarks of my lonely past with the comrade who had dispelled all loneliness. To see beauty with two pairs of eyes instead of one is bound to double it. I almost knew what he would say. What is more marvelous in all the phases of mental telepathy than to hear the voice of the beloved speak the very words which one was about to utter?

The village also was awake. The chimneys were smoking, the men were leaving for the fields and some of the women for the river, bundles on heads and carrying board and soap. We almost felt like part of them, for did we not also belong to the great army of workers?

The greetings of the villagers to "Mademoiselle Eve" were different somehow from the bobs and the curtseys which they made to the people of the Château, not less respectful, but certainly more genial and familiar. As for Philip, nobody had ever been known to resist his friendly smile.

As we left the village, la Pierrette Chaloyard seemed to spring out from one of the hedges along the road. She was bent almost double and leaning heavily on her crooked stick. She had a wash-board under her arm and a roll of rags whose dirt she evidently intended to contribute to the river. We slowed up our quick steps to her shuffling sabots.

"Don't you remember, Mademoiselle Eve," she croaked, "it was I who told you of him before you yourself had met him, that day in the woods, when all the other *jeunesse* ran away in fright from la Pierrette and you stayed behind, just to show them how brave you were (or did your little heart really feel sorry for the poor old woman)? I saw him in your small white hand. Did I not tell you that he would be tall and pretty and fair? But take care, Mademoiselle Eve. As *you* see him, other women will also see him—tall and pretty and fair. You must not trust them, those other women, or

they will try and take him from you. You must hold on to your man, my little lady. If la Pierrette had known how to hold on to hers she would not be the lonely old *pauvresse* she is to-day.''

''I am holding on, la Pierrette. Never you fear, I am holding on. Don't you see that I have him by the arm with both hands, right now, lest you should weave a magic spell around him and claim him for your own?''

So she croaked, and so we laughed, till the birds sprang out of the hedges in fright at the noise we made.

And presently we reached the gurgling busy little river and found the boat in its accustomed nook. First, Philip put la Pierrette's board in a steady place on the pebbly bank and settled her as courteously as he would an old marquise among her silken cushions, for such was Philip's way.

I hopped to my place in the stern, Philip took the great unwieldy oar and off we pushed with merry shouts to the old witch on the shore.

Then the great awe and hush of beauty seized us as Philip pushed the boat towards the glory of the morning. We gazed spell-bound at the sky. It was as improbable and as gorgeous as

those reproduced by the old masters. Great luminous white clouds, like banks upon banks of scalding steam against a background of cold cerulean blue. It was the last act and grand finale of the rising of the sun.

It is no lack of memory which prevents me from repeating all of the conversation of that memorable morning; but most of it was of the kind that only lovers in a state of active eruption could be expected to appreciate.

We were not clever,—at least I was not, and I don't believe, on the whole, that Philip was either, when he talked to me in those primeval days when I was just learning how to be happy. Little things meant so much to us—little things which most people would consider very trifling.

We landed and lay in the long sweet grass and watched a grasshopper and a grasshopperess, weaving a romance around their slender green persons.

What Philip said that Mr. Grasshopper said sounded very witty to me, and what I said that Mrs. Grasshopper said was so loving and tender that it caused Philip to make a quick movement which frightened the grasshopperess away. And then Philip spoilt the whole pretty idyll by insinuating that she had left her grasshopper

on account of his unpleasant habits in connection with chewing tobacco. I found the dragonflies much more romantic and even "the vulgar water spiders," as the naturalists call them, who glided with their loves over the surface of the water in a light and airy way most enviable to behold.

We had long and happy talks that morning, every sentence beginning with, "Do you remember?" Some of these reminiscences would send us off into peals of laughter and others would fill my eyes with tears, which Philip would kiss away, in order to hide the dimness of his own.

"We need not be frightened at our happiness, sweetheart," Philip soothed. "We paid for it first. God will be good and not ask us to pay again."

We did not philosophize, nor did we moralize, not once that day. How can lovers discuss the future and the soul when each is looking at the other with the young adoring eyes of the present! It is all just "you and I" at first. What the French call the exquisite egotism of two. In other words that dear togetherness which is known to very few and should be the ever-recurring *motif* of the harmony of love.

That was our day of days,—a day to cast its

brightness over any dark days which the future might have in store.

It was the day of the fulfillment.

We came home to Mariette hungry for nothing but her lunch.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE WORLD-OLD LESSON

"We learn the law of East and West,
That this is love and love is this,
The world-old lesson of the nest."

H. K. VIELE.

We were truly Mariette's babies. She fed us, kept the little house sweet, looked after our clothes and even sent us to bed if she thought we were sitting up too late. She scolded us if we tore our clothes or went out in the rain without our *sabots*. *Sabots* are the rubbers of the poor in the villages of France—not the big turned up white ones of the field, but neat, little, black ones which clatter gayly over the cobblestones.

That care-free, lazy day on the river was the first of many days of hard bread-winning work. The love and appreciation which we both had for Nature was not only our delight, but our means of livelihood. Almost everybody has an unconscious love of the beautiful, but that faculty

has been so trained and so developed in artists that it is part of their being.

Every morning, when it did not rain, we would rise at six and go down to the river. There was enough variety in the sunlight and the shade of its banks to fill a picture gallery with gems.

Philip's greatest gift was portrait painting, but one must first be famous before making much money at that. I loved his water and his trees. In each sketch there was a girl—sometimes in a boat, sometimes on a bank,—hair unbound and rippling in the sun, feet dabbling in the water, or else straight and strong in the boat, every sinew in action over the great oar, with head thrown back and bare, slender throat. Oh, yes, an artist's wife must help, and, besides, none of these girls were really me. It is so easy to omit from a model the indefinable expression which makes a likeness.

When Philip did not need me to pose for him I would read aloud. Philip's classics had all been French and I loved to visit with him the world of fiction of my childhood. In sentimental moods I would read Tennyson and the out-of-door setting seemed to suit the "Idylls of the King."

Then, there were the rainy days—the blessed rainy days which meant so much to the roses.

We had a gigantic task which we only did on days like that.

The walls of the Hermitage had been roughly plastered and we had undertaken their decoration.

Philip wanted the living-room to suggest the scene of our wedding feast, in commemoration of David's lovely breakfast. He painted the green trellis and the roses in rough bold strokes and the effect was really lovely.

Meanwhile, I was busy with my own room. Each wall was to be a glowing bank of hollyhocks and I merely had to look out of the window to reproduce the wild glory of our garden. There was no genius in my work, but the effect was very gay indeed. Mariette was our critic and believed that our work was little short of magic. Never did a summer slip so quickly by.

It is a cruel law of Nature which shortens happy days. The bullfinch sang himself hoarse, trying vainly to catch the tune of Philip's favorite song which he sang continually at the top of his lungs, about dead laurels and faded roses. Philip warbled the refrain in a high key: *Je jure devant Dieu que je vous aime!* and the foolish bird piped after him.

July and August are not sultry in Burgundy —just warm and balmy. We spent most of our

Sundays at the Château in endless games of *Boule* on the terrace. A small wooden ball called *Cochonet* or piglet would be rolled at a distance of about a hundred feet and then each in turn would send large balls towards it, the one which got nearest being the winner. Rather a dull game in itself, but not when accompanied with merry shouts and laughter. It had been played there ever since the terrace was built and no doubt Henry the Fourth had had his fling at it.

A little vicomte and a slender baron from a neighboring château took a prominent part in these Sunday games and the gyrations they went through in order to pick up and present the balls to Marie and Renée at exactly the right moment were wonderful to behold.

Meanwhile, the Comte de Lamotte would walk up and down in earnest debate with the old Marquis de Gesac, father of the young men, while our dear hostess lent her patient ear to the garrulous marquise. There were many Sundays just like this, but each one seemed different and none monotonous.

September was on us before we knew it, the all-important and most active month in Burgundy, when man, woman and child drop everything else to join in the grape picking.

Philip also put his other work aside, so as

to paint them as they toiled. The air actually smelt grapes. Mariette and la Pierrette Chaloyard picked all of ours which were to be crushed into wine by one of the Comte de Lamotte's presses.

The ladies of the Château always visited their vintage and farms at this time of the year and there was nothing I liked better than to accompany them.

One special bright September day springs quickly to my memory's call, when Philip helped and tucked us into the vast depths of the old carriage, with its high, old-fashioned springs. He could not go with us, for he had no time to spare from the fleeting autumn scenes which he was trying to transfer to canvas. Black-eyed Renée mocked him from her safe corner. They two were fast friends and never lost a chance at teasing. A look, like a caress flashed between us, and off we jogged.

We drove along the road to Cluny, beside the winding Grosne, to the village of Massili. Philibert always remained at the inn with the horses, as the road to the de Lamottes' farm was too rough for the carriage.

So we walked through the village, Madame de Lamotte, Marie and I, with Renée running on ahead in her young, impulsive way.

When we reached the pasture belonging to the farm, the gay, green pasture crossed by a babbling brook, full of water-cress, the great white oxen stood and looked at us from the other side of the fence, filling me with foolish fear. But the farmer's wife, the good Benasse, had seen us coming and ran to meet us and to drive the gentle beasts away. She took us first to the big barn and showed us a sow with thirteen young ones, so pink and comical, with their silly, little, twisted tails. But we had come for the vintage and had to walk up to the vineyard on the hill above the farm. It was ideally situated for the produce of good wine, for the best vineyards lie about half-way up the hillside, where they get the full rays of the sun, the vine apparently deteriorating as it is planted above or below.

We were soon armed with baskets and small knives and went to join the vintagers, who had been working since dawn. They greeted us and made room for us among them. They moved along the narrow paths, up and down, stripping the vines of every grape, with quick, dexterous fingers. The women picked the grapes and dropped them in the *hottes* or baskets which were strapped on the men's backs. These baskets, when full, were emptied into the *bennes* or

barrels, lined up at the end of the paths. It is such fun to cut off the big black bunches which taste so good, warmed by the sun!

It was soon time to stop for refreshments, and la Benasse brought great slices of brown bread, goat-cheese, nuts, vine-peaches and grapes *ad libitum.* When work was resumed the vintagers sang old songs in patois.

At sunset, everybody stopped working. The *bennes* were piled into a large wagon which all hands followed to the farm, singing. They were then emptied into a great vat, ready for the next day's pressing, when a huge stone would descend on the grapes. The juice as it first comes out is far from good. We tasted some at the farm, and it was too sweet and very muddy. It only attains its beautiful color after it has stood some time in barrels.

We were tired from our unaccustomed work and glad of the comfortable seats in "l'Américaine." La Benasse packed a basket of her best farm products for us to take with us and also one of grapes, and our fellow-workers saw us off with cheers.

A slight mist had risen in the fields along the Grosne, floating like thin white muslin veils. That is what they call "vintage weather" in

Burgundy, as it is the forerunner of a fair to-morrow.

What a subject it would have been to paint!

Then the evenings began to shorten and we two drew closer to our chimney corner. We had other dinner parties like that dear first one, to which the little vicomte and the slender baron were also invited. The semi-American atmosphere of our house seemed to have an unconscious effect on Marie and Renée, who would find themselves talking to these young fellows in the most natural manner imaginable. They formed a quartet of harmonious laughter, so dear and so contagious to youth.

The spell would only last while they were at the Hermitage and it was amusing to see them resume their formal manners at the Château, with a betraying twinkle in somebody's eye now and then.

November was to take our friends away. The Count was anxious to get back to the Chamber of Deputies. There were claims which he wished to make for his department.

Marie and I had a childish tryst which we wished to keep in memory of my first visit to Cormatin—to bid good-by to the park on the

day of departure. We rose very early, as we had done two years before, and strolled together before daylight, saying a last farewell to the paths and the groves and the river which my little friend so passionately loved.

Sadly and slowly we walked with linked arms, visiting every favorite nook. The wind moaned way up in the poplars and the leaves rustled under our feet. It was always a fresh heart-ache to gentle Marie this bidding good-by to the only place she ever called home. She drooped in the winter with her longing to get back to it and waxed rosier and stronger every month she spent in it. This departure was the saddest one of all, as she was leaving her best friend behind.

"You will write to me, my Eve, every week. You will let me share your happiness, won't you? And, *chérie,* you will be good to poor Djali and love her for my sake?"

"Never fear, Marie, she will have a warm place on my hearth and the most savory bones shall be saved for her. She will be very happy, little sister, for happiness is contagious wherever Philip is. And remember, dear, we are coming up to Paris in February to sell our pictures. Our brooks and apple-trees and cupids will appeal to the public when everything else is

cold and gray. We will see you then, *chérie,* if only for a few days."

Djali presses close to her mistress with the wistful eyes of a dog who, having seen the family trunks, feels that there is nothing left to hope for.

We saw them off that morning, the dear and loving friends, and so did most of the village.

As I walked back rather silently, depressed at the going of my friends, a little jeering voice murmured very faintly: "It will be rather dull for Philip, this solitude with you." Where do such cruel voices come from, piping up now and then when life is doing its best for you? They are sharp and sudden as a serpent's tooth and so intangible that you can not silence them.

Just then Philip looked down at my rueful face. "Why, Sweetheart, this is not a funeral. They have gone to Paris. Well, what of that? I, for one, am mighty glad to have my little girl to myself at last. They are very dear, those people, but they seem to think themselves part owners in my child. I will confess to you, now that they are gone, that I have been extremely jealous and have only been so patient because they were going away. We have a glorious winter ahead of us, darling. Our wood is piled high and so are our books. Hurrah, for the

Wilderness and 'Thou' beside me! The jug is well filled, thanks to our good vineyard, and as for the loaf, why, Mariette can make that one of old Omar's look like thirty cents, on baking-day."

## CHAPTER V

### STORK OR ANGEL'S WINGS?

PHILIP'S prophecy came true. It was a glorious winter indeed for the hermits.

Philip had a great deal to do finishing his sketches, for his work on the river had been mostly notes taken for indoor completion, and my cupids, of course, kept me busy indefinitely.

We read a great deal in the early evenings, but on the whole kept the peasants' hours.

Monsieur le Curé dined with us now and then, bringing with him an atmosphere of tolerance and good humor more entertaining than his rather prosy sermons which we dutifully sat through every Sunday in the village church, but rarely listened to.

We were both indefatigable walkers and scoured the country in every weather.

It seemed but a few weeks before February was on us and we had rounded up the work we wished to sell and crated it for Paris; but Eve was not feeling very well and Philip would have to go alone. Who had ever heard of anything

so cruel as a three days' separation! But it was inevitable and we must be brave.

So we parted for the first time since our marriage. I did not even go to the station—it would never do to break down in public; better far to have it out at home on Mariette's kind shoulder.

After three days, which seemed three weeks, Philip was back again. The dealers had been splendid and had bought nearly everything; and the best of Philip's pictures had been dispatched to the Salon, with every hope of admittance. He had seen Mother, of course, and Jack Dorre, who had wanted to return with him; but could not afford it. The de Lamottes were all well, except the Count, whose health seemed to be failing a little. "And, oh! Eve, my little wife, I am Home, I am Home!"

A great and wonderful thing had come to pass, for a baby was to be the apotheosis of our love. The mere waiting for him was glorious service. Never did I come nearer to painting really well than when I tinted the rough walls of his room sky blue and then decorated them with a four cornered circle of dancing, rollicking cupids!

A big crate arrived at this time from Mother.

In it was a crib, fit for a young emperor, billowing lace and pink ribbons, like a full blown rose. All it needed was a flower-like face and crumpled pink fingers to complete the illusion of small center leaves. She also sent a white wicker trunk, full of fragrant worshipful garments, a little washstand and other foolish baby luxuries which held their own rather quaintly in this Holy of Holies of the primitive little Hermitage.

Spring had come again and then the roses. They were clambering and clustering in the muslin-clouded, trellised windows. The bullfinch whistled and trilled in his cage; but the rest of the world seemed to be holding its breath while it waited for Baby.

I had been waiting for Baby ever since I was ten years old and had had my first peep at a brand-new one, just arrived in the apartment next door. As I looked at it and reverently held my breath, I seemed to understand that being a girl was not such an unmitigated misfortune, after all, as, in order to become a mother, one must, necessarily, start by being a girl. I knew from that day forth that some time, in the dim, far future, I, too, would have a child. I knew it with a splendid certainty, unspoiled by any doubt. I occupied my hitherto lonely hours in

loving it, petting it, planning for it, also in bestowing on it, in imagination, the many toys and things which I had longed for in vain.

So this final, definite waiting for Baby was nothing new to me,—merely an old joy intensified and brought closer. I kept all of these feelings in the most intimate recesses of my heart, not only from years of habit, but because of Philip's masculine want of understanding. Somehow, I did not seem to care to share them even with him. They were strictly between Baby and myself.

One balmy evening, the stork, who had been hovering all day, swooped and dropped, and then Baby was there!

The kind, the wise, the gentle stork, so discreet and so shielding, whose respectable broad back carries so many babies, so many burdens. He is really more midwife and doctor than bird; but, above all, he stands for the idealization of childbirth, and sometimes you think you hear the angels when it is only the flutter of his wings.

When I opened my eyes old Doctor Dubois was standing over me with a little flannel bundle in his arms: *"Regardez, petite Eve, quel beau gas le Bon Dieu vous envoie,"* and he stooped and put my boy in my arms.

And there was Philip on his knees beside me

with happy tear stains on his dear face, not even pretending any interest in his son.

Oh, if words would come to me as vividly and as gloriously as the impressions of that day, I would write things which would make all women who read them feel that motherhood was the one thing to grow up for, to experience and to remember!

Happy wives and mothers look back to those restful days and weeks which follow their baby's birth, when husband and household and friends surround them with loving care! All responsibility ceases and the housekeeping, which required nearly all of their attention formerly, proceeds with apparent ease. The central figure on the scene is a small, shapeless and sometimes noisy bundle which comes to you or goes from you, borne by capable hands.

Mariette was in her element at last, the handling of infants being as the breath of her nostrils.

"Oh, Mademoiselle Eve, is it God-possible that this great fellow is your son, *votre fils ton?* Never before have I seen such a boy! I believe that if I should put him down he would walk away. Me, who am speaking to you, I have seen many a boy baby in my day, but never, *au grand jamais,* a boy like that!"

While Mariette enjoyed her new responsibilities, La Pierrette Chaloyard pottered around in the little kitchen on her chicken feet. Mariette had consigned to her the humble privileges of making the fire and cleaning the casseroles, but always appeared at the crucial moment to give a deft turn to omelette or chop.

Soon I was up and doing, the only difference being that I toted Baby as I did. And Baby seemed to understand that he must not bother Father, for he was, oh, so good and quiet!

We took up our work again, while little Philip lay on a rug, not much more trouble than a kitten. In my heart was a great joy and it did not seem to me that life could have anything more to offer me.

## CHAPTER VI

### CORMATIN PASSES INTO OTHER HANDS

Though my new happiness had, of course, been very absorbing, I still thought and spoke constantly of my best of friends.

The de Lamottes had been passing through dark days and had little to cheer them at this time, outside of our glowing letters.

The splendid old count had had a stroke the day after Baby was born. Trunks were being packed for Cormatin and the girls could hardly wait to see "little Eve's little baby." The count had gone to the Chamber of Deputies and had just made a speech in favor of some improvement in his Department (a speech which won out as a beautiful memorial to him in the end). He had sat down amidst a storm of applause and had then toppled over. He had been brought home to the dismantled apartment and had been hovering between life and death ever since. And now, when Baby was only a few weeks old, the dreaded telegram came announcing the end.

Baby was too young to take with me or

to leave behind, so Philip went to them alone and I had nothing but my inadequate pen with which to tell them of my sobbing sympathy. I knew that Philip would be all and more to them than a son could be and was proud to lend them his strong arm and tender heart.

In a few days Philip was back, bringing all of the sad details of the funeral.

The three dazed women had not only lost an adored husband and father, but nearly everything besides which helped to make their lives free from care. The fortune of the count's first wife had only been his during his lifetime and would now return to her son. The salary of Deputy would stop. The dreamer had had little to leave if his beautiful memory and exquisite poems counted for naught. Of course, there was still the Château, but how could they live in it without sufficient means? And so they would have to lease it to strangers. Thus, with the help of the farm and the vineyards, the dear women would be able to keep on living in the apartment in comparative comfort. It was so hard to realize it all. Cormatin without the de Lamottes! The de Lamottes without Cormatin! And what of the love-birds, the *péruches,* perched up on the hill, without any future *raison d'être?*

It was now the end of June and there would be no trouble in getting a tenant for an historical château in Burgundy, with all of the modern conveniences (meaning, one bathroom, down near the kitchen, equipped with a fine long zinc tub and spigots of water, both hot and cold). One cannot find a château like that every day, where a gay Parisienne can play at being *Madame la Châtelaine* and give house parties in the fall.

And sure enough we soon received the news that the Château had been rented,—rented to one of the greatest prima donnas of the world. She wanted to bury herself and rest,—at least, that is what she said.

We in our Hermitage were thrilled at the news—thrilled with resentment at the intruder and with interest in the singer. I had never heard her sing, but had often longed to, and now she was coming so near and maybe she would sing to me if I could make her like me.

It seemed almost disloyal to my poor friends, —this eager interest in the diva,—but youth is always like that and sadness cannot hold it long. So we waited for the end of August with impatience. Madame Wilowglowska was the lady's name, presumably or assumably a Russian.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE NEW TENANTS

The new tenants arrived at last with clatter and bustle and servants and trunks,—only two women,—and one of them was, oh, so beautiful! I saw that with my first delighted glance, as I sat on the little hill above the road, where I had hurried to see them pass, bareheaded, like any peasant, with my baby at my breast. I gazed at her with eyes that loved and trusted all beautiful things and I hoped that when I met her she would meet my youth half-way with hers, for I wanted another woman to talk to. Philip had been away three days. He had gone to Paris again to try and sell our pictures and I did not expect him back till he had succeeded in doing so. I was not exactly lonely. How could I be with a child in my arms and a man in my heart!

I gave a mute welcome to the splendid creature sitting back in *l'Américaine,* while the sturdy dappled grays, old Romeo and Juliet, plodded in unison up the poplar-shaded road

to Cormatin. She did not glance up at me, but her head was high and her bronzed red hair gleamed in the sun as it burst and rippled over her temples from under the little blue traveling toque. Her brown eyes glistened like wet Chinkapins, her full lips were crimson even at the corners where the red pencil had not reached. The column of her throat emerged from the low collar whiter even than the tip-tilted powdered little nose. It was impossible to guess where the rouge stopped on her firm cheek and where the glow of health began and yet you knew that both were there. I watched her with eager artist's eyes and had to admit that she had used powders, pencils and rabbit's foot better than I could have wielded my brushes. Nature had painted her in such pure and vivid hues that Art was unable to make or mar her beauty.

There was an older (much older) woman sitting beside her, one of those sheep-dogs in which Paris abounds, whose love of ease, combined with poverty, compels them to rent out their noble names and respectability. They take the position of mock chaperones to beautiful pastless women who use them not only as companions and badges of conventionality, but sometimes merely as foils to their beauty. I

learned this afterwards. At the first glance I took her for the mother.

When the carriage had turned in at the Château gate, accompanied by the usual clanging of the lodge bell, Baby and I went slowly back to the Hermitage and found Mariette just from the village and bursting with news.

The place was all astir and the excitement was intense over the arrival of the beautiful Russian, *"la belle dame."* The big trunks which stood on end, like veritable wardrobes; the absurd dogs, the *toutons,* with black snouts like monkeys and curly tails like pigs (save my respect)—a whole family of them—what! The biggest and fattest was named "Cupidon." Who had ever heard of a dog named Cupid? The other three were his wife and daughters and the maid had said to them, *"par ici, Mesdames,"* just as if they were Christians. She was so pretty and chic, the maid—*"une vraie dame, quoi"* and the Maître d'hôtel *"si bien astiqué, si élégant."* Madame's riding horse had also arrived, showing the whites of his eyes *comme un démon* and not touching the earth at all when he pranced. It was a good thing for the Château and it would wake it up again. *La Dame de Paris* would spend money and that would help the poor.

I was almost as excited as Mariette, for the next day I would have to put on my best dress, find a parasol to shade my freckled nose and go and call on *"la Dame."*

Then all minor things were put aside and forgotten to make ready for the sacred rite of putting Baby to bed.

I was the only priestess now at this ceremony. Mariette pretended to be absorbed in the brewing of the evening soup, which was boiling and dancing in the *pot-au-feu* on the stove, but she would peep in now and then at the antics of my son. He lay on his back in my lap in front of the fire of crackling faggots, for the late August evening was a little chilly. He was shamelessly naked, with fists in mouth, smothering his delighted googling, shooting lusty legs and curling unspeakably fascinating toes. Then over on stomach to display his broad athletic back, head up like a turtle and leaning on angel-bitten elbows, so adorable in his abandon that he brought the woman at last to her knees at his feet where she belonged. *"Oh, le petit monstre! Voyez—vous ça! l'Amour! le Coco!"* and such like unmentionably foolish mother-talk, where artist and peasant vied in doddering idiocy.

The angel was soon tucked into his warm crib

and, when Mariette, after much clatter and putting of things away, had finally climbed up her ladder, I sat and dreamed into the night as mothers will,—dreams of great deeds and great honors, all connected with my son. But my last thought as I went to sleep was of the beautiful woman with the red-gold hair.

## CHAPTER VIII

### LA WILOWGLOWSKA

The next morning I awoke with a feeling of pleasant anticipation. What was it? Oh, yes, I was going to call on the "pretty Lady."

I hastened over the duties I loved so well. First Baby, a cupid to bathe and dress and play with, just a little; then my canvas, another cupid, to finish for a pressing order.

As soon as I was free I hunted up my almost forgotten finery. The brown silk ruffled dress had had very little wear since the wedding, but was sadly crumpled and mussed. "Quick, an iron, Mariette." Also, a few stitches here and there. Blessed, happy, little brown dress! Each silken fold held some memory of my joyous wedding-day. A faint stain on the bosom recalled the white roses which Philip had fastened there. I would have to be very kind to it and never tie the soft knot of its bosom over anything but a happy heart. The brown tulle bonnet with the yellow buttercups still had an air to it. The parasol to match was as good as new and the long golden brown gloves not too

much the worse for wear. The tout ensemble had an undefinable look of the Paris from whence they had come.

At last I sallied forth in the high-heeled brown slippers and, as I sauntered down the village street, my friends came to their front doors to look at and admire me. Louisa, the gate-keeper of the Château, let me in and rang the bell to announce the small pedestrian.

An unfamiliar butler received me and led me to the terrace where the ladies were sitting. Madame de Wilowglowska came forward to meet me with outstretched hands and graceful impulsiveness:

"*Ah! la petite voisine, n'est ce pas? La jolie Hermite de là-haut,*" with a nod at our hill. "Oh, I know all about you, child! When I called on Madame de Lamotte, to make the last arrangements, she told me of the many advantages of Cormatin, one of the principal ones being my proximity to you and your talented young husband. She spoke of you so much and so well that she saved me all of the preliminaries of a charming acquaintance. *Hermite* indeed! You would look more in your place in the Rue de la Paix!"

"Oh, Madame, you should see me in my sabots and short *cotillon* with my *caraco* tied in

by a blue linen apron, then you could not tell me from one of the village girls."

She clapped her hands: "Bravo! Bravo! You will have to show me how to dress like that."

She was draped in a black satin kimona, embroidered in gold, broadly belted in at the loins with a yellow scarf. A great golden peacock was embroidered on the back of it, reaching from neck to heels, and her auburn hair was piled up on her head *à la chinoise.* She did not seem quite so young as she had looked to me with her hat on, but the tiny lines in her face only added to its charm, suggesting that she had suffered. This minor note was all that her beauty needed to soften it and make it more appealing.

The older woman had slipped noiselessly away after a timid acknowledgment to an offhand introduction.

Madame Wilowglowska was the most bewitching creature I had ever met and I was the willing victim of her charms from the very first. An elusive fresh perfume seemed to emanate from her person, suggesting early morning and things in bloom. She told me when I knew her better that it was a Russian extract with a guttural name meaning "Dawn."

Then we had tea in glasses *à la Russe.* Everything seemed so different on the "Terrace" and yet there was very little apparent change.

The door of the "Orangery" was open and an intoxicatingly sweet odor was coming through it from the orange blossoms. The courtly old-fashioned de Lamottes had taken their atmosphere with them when they left and the beautiful Slav had introduced in its place her own intangible, alluring personality. Yes, everything was different though outwardly unchanged.

I had a great deal to tell Madame of Cormatin and the many legends interwoven with its history.

One of the favorite pranks of my long visit had been to receive tourists and show them through the *Appartements Dorés,* a cap and apron hastily assumed for the occasion, reciting parrot-like the history of the old place, using the quaint expressions of the country and bobbing and curtseying over the fee which I would hand over to Louisa. It suited her well, as my youth and impudence brought me more money than she had ever hoped for. The de Lamottes had never approved of this performance, but

then what could they do with Eve when the spirit of mischief possessed her?

It was very gratifying to watch Madame's eyes light with interest as I chatted. She made me promise that I would come the next day and show her the "Gilded Apartments" just as I used to do for tourists.

She was enchanted with the place and had installed herself in Madame de Lamotte's room, which had once been a chapel. The pretty Gothic arches and yellow brocade draperies delighted her.

Yes, she had come to Cormatin to rest. Her nerves were quite gone. A singer's life was too much for any woman. She had actually run away from all of her friends, not even leaving her new address behind.

*Que diable!* A woman had a right to her own privacy now and then. And now she had found a little friend who had come down to her from the stars—just like that—she would need nobody else,—not for some time, anyway.

When I rose at last to go she said, with almost a ring of disappointment in her voice, "Aren't you going to ask me to sing for you?"

"Oh, Madame, I did not dare! Will you? Will you?"

And then we went into the old salon, with its lingering fragrance of dead roses, where a wonderful grand piano stood in place of the old *clavecin.* She sat down and very simply struck a few wild minor chords with her little jeweled fingers, and then she sang. Ye gods, how she could sing! Russian folk-songs with the wail of an oppressed race, and only me for an audience, to feel alone the poignant emotions which were generally shared by thousands of mad applauders. Tears came to my relief, as they always did when my feelings were too much for me, and she did not ask for greater praise. She kissed me when we parted and told me that to me her name was Olga.

As I wandered slowly home, thinking of her beauty and recalling every curve of her mobile face, a dream came into my head, one that was worthy of a more ambitious woman: Philip should paint her! This would be the one great opportunity of his life. Her picture should bring him fame and be *the* portrait of the next Salon. First, he should hear her sing, just as I had. He could then study in her face all of the changes of her emotional nature. He would see her in different lights and then concentrate all of her loveliness in the picture. When it was finished it would be hung in a very promi-

nent place in the Salon. Crowds would stand in front of it all day. Some would say: "There is the Wilowglowska! Who is the artist who was able to put all of her *feu sacré* into the portrait?" And others would answer: "Why, don't you know? It is young Philippe de Bracy, the best portrait-painter of the year."

When I had reached this point I hastened my steps and, as I pushed open the unlatched door of the Hermitage, I was swung from the ground and to the heart of the great painter of the future.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE NEWS FROM PARIS

It was good to have my man back again. The little house was not the same without him. All real meals stopped during his absence. Mariette and I had a cup of tea and a few scraps now and then when we happened to be hungry. What was the use of cooking good things when there was no man around to enjoy them! Mariette was celebrating Philip's return at this very minute in the kitchen, from whence appetizing fumes were emerging.

Philip was brimming over with news of everybody—Mother, Jack Dorre, his people and the fellows in the Quartier. He had sold all of the pictures which he had taken with him. The little sketch of me, paddling at dawn on the Grosne in peasant dress, had brought a splendid price. All of the apple-blossom studies had sold well and also my cupids. I was not inordinately proud of my cupids. They never had been real art at their best and were bought by quite a different class of people from those who

admired Philip's pictures. But on the other hand I was very glad indeed of the little checks they brought me, which prevented Baby and me from being too heavy a load on my dear boy, for boy he was in every sense of the irresponsible, care-free word.

I put a clean dress on Baby and brought him in to see his father, and Philip tried to look interested, even passing his hand over the downy head, which made my son pucker up his little foolish face and squeal, frightened by the big man whom he had forgotten during his short absence. Philip turned quickly away, as he always did from unbeautiful things, and Mariette rushed in and bore off her darling. Oh, when would he begin to love his child! I shook off the tiny cloud and gave myself up to the sunshine of Philip's all-enchanting presence.

After dinner I fetched my embroidery, brought Philip his favorite pipe and settled down to listen to the news from Paris.

Mother was as well and as unexpected as ever. She was writing a treatise on the Koran which made it necessary to entertain Turks at dinner.

Jack Dorre's latest poem had made a sensation in the *Mercure de France.* Madame de Bracy was deep in church work. Louis Rapin was competing for the Prix de Rome. Auguste

de Meaupon had been arrested for painting the nose of one of the statues on the Place de la Concorde bright red. Alphonse Barre had left his ugly wife after spending all her money, and de Souza's wife had eloped with Achille Dufour.

The comrades had given Philip a dinner at Foyot's and of course I had to know just what they had had to eat and just what witty things had been said and who had said them. Grodet had been there. "Eve, do you remember?"

"Yes, Philip, how could I ever forget? The five francs he loaned to Jack Dorre to drink to our engagement! Oh, happy then! Oh, happy now!"

Louis Rapin had had just a little too much, had wept and vowed that nobody really loved him but his Newfoundland dog. When the party had finally broken up at two in the morning he declared that he could not and would not walk, so they picked him up and carried him all the way to Montmartre where he lived. When they reached his door he jumped nimbly to his feet, thanked them for his restful ride and ran up-stairs two steps at a time.

I laughed till I cried over the droll way in which Philip told it. It was not till quite late that I had a chance to talk to him of my one ad-

venture and of the beautiful Russian. Philip's eyes brightened responsively at my glowing description of her beauty, but I did not tell him of my dreams about the portrait. He would understand that better after he had seen her.

The next morning I left Philip to rest from the fatigues of his journey and slipped out early to keep my appointment with Madame. I was dressed in my village clothes and was going to play for her benefit the little comedy of showing the "Gilded Apartments" to tourists.

At the gate I recruited Louisa, to help me in my task, as she knew just how to open and close the great shutters.

Madame was expecting me, dressed for her part of the performance in a jaunty bicycling costume and Alpine hat.

We stood and laughed at each other and then preceded by Louisa entered the big carved door of the left wing of Cormatin.

I immediately began in a loud monotonous voice, "This room, Messieurs, Dames, is the great hall of guards" . . .

In a few minutes the comedy was forgotten and we went from musty room to musty room, arm in arm, like two eager girls, I going over the old tales which I loved and she, this lovely

incarnation of all things new and modern, listening and losing herself in the past.

When it was over, "*Merci, merci, petite Eve!* You will come often. You will take me out of myself. I am so tired of my poor little self, tired of praise, tired of money, tired of the glare and the footlights. You will dine with me to-morrow, *n'est—ce pas?* You and your husband? Will he like me, do you think, or will he think me vain and frivolous and want to keep his adorable little wife away from me?"

"Oh, Madame, Philip is so big, so generous! Oh, yes, he will like you! Besides, he is something of a pagan, my husband, for he worships beauty."

## CHAPTER X

### THE PORTRAIT

The next evening, at the appointed time, we were picking our way down the rocky village street. I wore a dainty dress of pale blue batiste, knotted here and there with black velvet bows, and a rose-wreathed leghorn hat. Philip carried his flannels as only Philip could.

We always walked hand-in-hand in the open, and thus we came swinging along the avenue of poplars as the old bell rang its welcome and the sun went down with a last glance at the shimmering river.

Madame was waiting on the granite steps in a clinging burnt-orange evening dress which blended oddly with her hair. I stood and watched them meet with my eyes full of "I-told-you-so's," enjoying the almost dazzled admiration in Philip's face. I knew just what he was thinking. He had a passion for eyes which were far apart like hers. Somehow, I felt as if I were giving him a great treat, having met her first and brought him to her. We went right in

to dinner. The stately dining-room seemed different. The gold embroideries on the table, the ecclesiastical brass candelabra, the tropical fruit and Russian sweets gave it an Eastern barbaric setting so foreign to the simplicity of Madame de Lamotte.

I listened while they talked of things I did not know. Philip had been to Russia as a lad, in his parents' prosperous days. There was much which he remembered of Moscow, which was the home of Olga's childhood, and much that he was curious to learn about Russian habits and politics. Madame would put out a caressing hand to me now and then, with her head still towards Philip; but I soon tired of my silent rôle and turned my attention to the old Comtesse Vitztum. She was from Vienna and her nose was spread all over the middle of her face. She wore enormous semi-precious stones in quaint settings on her chest and wrists and seemed rather grateful to me for noticing her. I soon discovered that her ruling passion was Solitaire. She would teach me a game after dinner which called for three packs of cards, the aces counting thirteen points. As soon as we left the table she fetched the cards and we were soon engrossed in the intricacies of the game. As I was about to uncover a much-

needed four-spot I overheard these words which made my heart leap high:

"Monsieur de Bracy, do you think you could paint a portrait of me just as I am? I have so many 'Me's' on canvas, but not one really, truly me."

"Why, Madame," cried Philip, "I have been painting you all the evening. I have made several failures, but I feel now as if I could paint you better than anybody I have ever seen. When shall we begin?"

"To-morrow, *n'est ce pas? Volontiers, cher Monsieur,* any time which suits you and Monsieur the Sun, best."

When we got up to go she kissed me fondly. "He is a nice boy, your husband. You will not mind his painting 'la Wilowglowska,' *Mignonne?* A man who has you for a wife is as safe as that old prig of a Saint Anthony!"

When we were out into the night I slipped my hand into Philip's: "It is what I have been dreaming for you, dear. Isn't she glorious? Don't you know that it will be your masterpiece?"

Philip did not talk much. He was thinking of the portrait. "Yes, child, yes; it ought to be a good picture. She is a wonder, a marvelous being. Did you notice the rose pink on her

elbows and finger-tips? Her knees and her toes must also be like that.''

They can't help it, those artists. The habit of the atelier is too strong for them, and in all honor and reverence, their practiced eyes have a pretty woman stripped before they are aware of it. They are shameless only because they think no harm.

This woman's beauty became almost an obsession with Philip from that time on. He spoke and thought of little else and I would echo his praises of her body. ''Yes, Philip, she is indeed very lovely.''—''Yes, of course, I noticed how her ears lie like little pink shells against her head, and she has dimples on the back of her hands like a child.''

The large canvas arrived from Paris in due time and a full length portrait was begun. The sittings were interminable. Philip had lunch every day at the Château. Baby was more and more absorbing, more and more exacting. I had to be much at home. There were so many tasks for my busy hands, besides my cupid orders. There was a good deal of monotony about my painting. Sometimes I was required to do six groups exactly alike. It seemed such inferior art compared to Philip's; but, then, it had often kept the pot boiling.

Somehow the Hermitage seemed very lonely, more so almost than when Philip was in Paris, because he was so near and yet I saw so little of him. At night he was tired and preoccupied about his work. I did not want to worry him with my chatter. He would stand, pipe in mouth, in front of his easel, making charcoal sketches from memory of Olga's hands or arms or throat, then rub them out irritably and begin all over again. Surely this picture ought to be a success if weeks of my boy's undivided attention could make it one.

As the days went by a curious depression seemed to take hold of me. I did not want to sing to Baby any more. He had lately developed a little coo, like that of a wood-pigeon, which would make my eyes fill with tears of tenderness. His antics seemed to me more touching than funny now. What was the matter with me? I would have to shake this off. It savored too much of the tearful, deserted Eve of darker days. Deserted! Oh, what a dreadful word! Yes, but then, where was Philip, and when, ah when, would this portrait be finished?

## CHAPTER XI

### THE FLIGHT

I was unhappy and depressed. Something seemed to be gnawing at my heart, something to which I could not give a name. Surely, it was not Philip's fault that he was away so much. Was he not working on the picture that was to bring him fame! His reproduction of Olga's beauty had surpassed even my fondest dreams. I would slip over now and then and inspect it. It was a full length picture, as I said before, and she was dressed in the burnt-orange gown she wore when he first saw her. Straps of golden beads kept what there was of the upper part of the dress from slipping from her shoulders. The resplendent arms and neck were generously exposed and the clinging skirt was not too unkind in concealing the graceful limbs. The tender gleam of her red-brown eyes contradicted the defiant tilt of the bold little head and the wistful droop of the red lips contrasted oddly with the fearless attitude of this woman

who had held kings and emperors enthralled with the witchery of her voice and beauty.

Philip had more than done justice to this strange creature's contradictory personality, which she seemed to delight in displaying for his benefit. He would laugh or sing while he worked. They would throw me a few affectionate or chaffing words as one does to a child and I would go away, otherwise unnoticed.

A voice said to me suddenly one day, "You are jealous." It was a small, evil voice and it stabbed me like a knife. Oh, no, not that! Not jealous of Philip, my husband! Had he not proved his love through thick and through thin, and, besides that, Olga was as good as she was beautiful. Shame on such a voice!

And then another voice spoke to me. It spoke a little louder and I recognized the never-to-be-forgotten tones of the old Comte de Bracy: "I do not ask you to be good to Philip—we sometimes hate the women who are good to us. Lead him a dance if you choose and can, but, for God's sake, don't bore him! That is the one thing which we de Bracys cannot stand!" And I, what had I answered? I had said: "Comte de Bracy, I will love Philip and if I ever find that I am boring him I will go away."

Then, the voice of my own suffering heart

wailed: "Philip must be free! Philip must be free! Artists, poets and composers are the priesthood of genius and should never be hampered with wives and children. They stand alone and yet belong to all. Look at the stories of their lives,—how few of them have experienced domestic felicity!"

Things were beginning to be clearer to me now. I must go away and give Philip a chance. After these two years of marriage he would be able to judge just what it meant to him and he could then choose between it and freedom before it was too late. As for me,—well, I would risk it and at the worst, there would always be Baby.

I must go away without any fuss and make it all as easy for Philip as possible. Of course, I would have to hide at first—long enough for him to get used to getting on without me. Baby and I would surely be able to find a corner in this beautiful world (if he should not want us back) where we could live for each other. I would go on painting cupids, or, maybe, Mother would take us in when her first indignation would be over.

Most of these plans had come to me during a windy sleepless night, while Philip slept peace-

fully at my side. He spoke once in his sleep: "She is the eighth wonder of the world!" The shutters rattled and the sturdy little house rocked. Yes, I would go away to-morrow.

The morning sunshine made things seem a little brighter; but I did not waver in my plans.

Philip was very cheerful and sang merrily at his toilet. I tried to hide my preoccupation, but did not succeed very well.

"What ails you, Eve, darling? You seem a bit blue this morning. Aren't you well, little girl?"

"It is nothing, Philip. The wind kept me awake last night and now my head aches."

"Sure there is nothing else, little woman? Your eyes look almost as if you had been crying. Is Baby well? May I see him?"

So I fetched my little son and he put out both chubby arms to his father. Philip took him of his own accord for the first time. "He *is* a fine fellow! Why, Eve, I do declare he has a little dimple just like yours, near the left corner of his mouth! Tell me, has he any teeth?"

"Certainly, he has four little pearly ones right in front."

"So he has, so he has! But I shall be late

for the sitting. One of Olga's hands is giving me a lot of trouble. But you will have to give me a sweeter kiss than that before I go. Hello! What is it, Sweetheart?''

The floodgates were open and pouring down my cheeks. I would have given anything in the world to have been able to hold them back. Philip had always hated tears; they completely unnerved him and were so unbecoming, besides. He drew me on his knee and soothed and petted me till they had ceased to flow; then left me with a troubled look on his boyish face.

I pulled myself together, trying not to think, and packed a trunk with necessities for Baby and myself.

It was an easy matter to get the trunk to the station, as I was in the habit of sending it once a month to Paris, where Babette unpacked it, sent some of the contents to the cleaners, mended the rest and then returned it.

Père Mathurin, who ran the village baggage wagon, was hailed as he went down the road, and took my trunk to the station.

The hardest task was my letter to Philip. I destroyed many sheets of paper in my vain effort to write a logical explanation of my departure. Nothing that I wrote sounded natural and this is the best I could do:

"Dear, I am going away.

"It takes almost more courage to write this than to leave you. I know just what corners of your dear old face will go down as you read, and I know how your blue eyes—but I dare not think of them or I would turn coward and stay home. Something stronger than myself bids me to go and yet I don't seem to be able to find any words which would make you understand.

"I guess I have had more than my share of happiness and it is time for my luck to change. You will go to Paris and gather the laurels to which your portrait of Olga entitles you. A great artist belongs to the world and the world belongs to him. He should never be hampered by a family. Of course, you will miss your little Eve at first (Oh, that she should cause you a moment's pain!); but that will be a thousand times better than the slow torture of growing tired of her. I am going to stay with an old friend whom you have never heard me mention. She will be so good to me, and then some day I will write and tell you where I am. By that time you will know if you are happier without me. And then, if you should want me back, my Philip, I will come so gladly and never leave till death us part.

"Don't be angry with me, dear. I am only

doing this because I love you better than I do myself.

"Eve."

I laid the letter on his bureau with a rose, put on a hat and a long cloak and with Baby clasped with one arm and the bullfinch cage in my hand slipped out while Mariette was in the kitchen and walked slowly down the hill to the station.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE JOURNEY

I REACHED the *gare* just as the busy little train was slowing up, hastily bought a third-class ticket, claimed my trunk and scrambled into a bare compartment with narrow board seats. The only other occupant was a peasant woman who had come from somewhere up the country. She was also traveling with her baby, a fat, slobbering boy with folds of flesh at wrists and ankles, like the joints of a French doll.

We did not take long to scrape acquaintance or to compare babies. Her monstrosity made my boy look almost puny. We gave our sons their respective dinners and soon had them asleep, and then my fellow-traveler also dropped off noisily, and left me to my thoughts.

I was exhilarated with the bold step I was taking. All of my depression had left me. The mere fact of traveling was excitement after the quiet, peaceful year at the Hermitage. My flight was the result of the same emotional exaltation which had prompted me to fanatical

penance in my convent days. I had five hundred and fifty francs of cupid-money in my stocking and with economy would be able to live comfortably for several months.

I was glad to have a quiet hour in which to mature my plans. A name had rushed to my memory amidst the troubled thoughts of my sleepless night: Madame Vuro! Yes, I would go to Paris and to her. She had been a friend of Mother's and her story had made a deep impression on me.

When Mother had first known her she was a widow with four little daughters and some means which had enabled her to give them a good education. Then one by one, as they grew up, they married and left her. The ambitious mother had found husbands for them—good matches according to the world. But the sons-in-law had each in turn exacted large dots, such large ones that, when the last pretty daughter had married, there was little left for the devoted creature to live on, so she decided to take boarders. She found a suitable house in an out-of-the-way neighborhood where she would not be likely to run into any of her former friends, and thus passed out of Mother's gay circle.

The sons-in-law preferred that their wives should not visit the boarding-house very often.

But there was nothing of the martyr about Madame Vuro, although hers had been the sacrifice of a Père Goriot. She had no regrets and considered her daughters quite justified in concealing the occupation of which she herself was not ashamed. She was almost deserted by her children, but read with pride of their social pleasures and triumphs in fashionable papers which she took for the purpose.

It was to Madame Vuro that I had decided to go. I had always been a favorite with her, reminding her of her second daughter, and I knew that she would open to me, not only her arms, but her great, lonely mother's heart.

The train rattled and shrieked. Baby woke and cried, woke and laughed, woke and slept again. The bullfinch cowered in his cage. The other baby was very objectionable and bellowed like a young bull; but finally he and his mother reached their destination. She called back a friendly good-by to me as she climbed into a market wagon which was waiting for her.

Sometimes, the compartment was full; sometimes it was empty. As we neared a county fair the bustle, jostling and confusion became almost intolerable. Live chickens, ducks and geese were brought in by the feet. A few sad-eyed hunting dogs were pulled in by ropes and

one old woman carried in a bag a pig whose squeals seemed to pierce my brain. Children tagged along, eating things both sticky and greasy. Nurslings dined copiously, regardless of promiscuity. My poor boy got his meals at irregular intervals when the crowd was thinnest. The discomfort of the hard seat was almost more than I could bear. Baby's weight made me sit so heavily. I dared not go to sleep for fear that he would roll off of my lap. Once or twice I bought some of the refreshments which were thrust at me. Now and then the monotony would be enlivened by a dispute,—a resented shove, loud voices, violent gestures, threatening fists which never hit, apologies, sudden peace followed by friendly garrulousness and merry jests. Dear, irresponsible, excitable French people! How well I loved and understood them, for were they not almost my people? Hot heads, quick to boil over, like milk in a stove. But oh, what golden hearts! Many a kind word and service did I receive from those rough men and women that long and weary day.

"*Eh ben, bonne chance la petite mère,*" they would call to me as they clambered out.

When at last the train pulled into the Paris station I was almost too stiff and weary to stand up and was glad to hand the bullfinch to a porter

and ask him to connect the trunk and myself with a cab.

The worn leather seat felt luxurious to me as I sank down on it and jogged off to Passy. Madame Vuro was amazed to see me. She had completely lost sight of me since I had last seen her and did not even know of my marriage. She took Baby from me at once with tender understanding touch and handed the bullfinch to the maid.

"My poor little Eve, I never would have known you but for those big eyes. What has brought you like this to Maman Vuro in the night? Bless the child! Wasn't Baby enough to carry without bringing a bird? *Mais c'est un ange du Bon Dieu que ce bébé-là.* You look as if you had come a long journey, you two; but you have come to the right place. This way with Madame's trunk. Just a little more courage, *ma mignonne.* Two flights of stairs to climb and then Annette and I will put you both to bed."

And they literally did, bathed us and put us to bed. Then I was propped up to a tray of dainty food.

"No, no, my little Eve, you shall not talk tonight. *Maman* will listen to you in the morning. Maybe there are some tangles which this

old head can straighten out for you, *ma chérie.* You two babies must sleep first and then we shall see what we can do. Oh, but it is good to have a little girl to take care of once again. *Bonsoir, bonsoir, chérie!*''

## CHAPTER XIII

### MADAME VURO

Next morning Madame Vuro stole into my room and kidnapped Baby. He and she had an engagement connected with his first bottle and I slept on into the day as only the weary sleep. When I awoke at last Baby was back beside me, very full of the milk of human kindness and ready for a nap.

Madame brought me some coffee herself, fussed around at our comforts, then perched herself on the foot of the bed and said, "Now, tell me." The little woman's curiosity had stood about all that it was going to. She had known me in the care-free days of the winter I was sixteen and I had all of Philip to fill in.

The beginning of my love story told very well and her bright eyes sparkled with interest. She uttered short ejaculations now and then of commiseration or surprise; but when my narrative drew near to my flight from Cormatin her expression became troubled.

"But, *petite,*" she at last interrupted, "why

did you go and leave your Philippe? Did you think he was in love with the adorable Russian?''

''Oh, Madame,'' I gasped, ''you would not ask me that if you knew Philip. How could he have loved anybody else when he loved me?''

''Well, then, tell me why you left him.''

''I wanted to give him a chance to be free. It struck me, a little late perhaps, that a man with his great talent should not be hampered with wife and child. You see, I did not know till he had painted that portrait that I was married to a genius. It frightened me and I made up my mind that I would go before I should be in the way.''

''Foolish, foolish Eve! From what you have told me of Philippe I do not believe that he had any desire for that kind of freedom. Besides, how could you and this angel and the bullfinch be in anybody's way, any more than the spring is or the sunshine or the flowers? Those are the things which all men need the most—those and a loving, trusting wife. Trust is the strongest and the most subtle of all bonds. You have made a big mistake, my little girl; but you shall stay here with *Maman* Vuro and think it all over, and then some day you will come to me and say: 'You were right, *Maman,* and I am

going back to the man who loves me and is waiting for me.' ''

So this was the way my great sacrifice appeared to others. I hung my head like a chidden child and thanked Madame in a low voice for her interest and advice. She folded me to her heart as only a mother can.

''But come now, *petite,* we must think of the boy. We will find him a little carriage and he shall stay in the yard whenever the sun is shining. You have not seen my little yard. Come over to the window and you will get a bird's-eye view of it.''

It was an absurd little place, about sixty feet square, in which Madame evidently took great pride. The four high walls of it were covered with ivy and it was divided into little plots of grass and flower-beds with scalloped wire railings. Iron benches and small iron tables were crowded along the path, so that the boarders could sip their after-dinner coffee out of doors in warm weather.

Several stout magpies were strutting around in the grass. Madame said that they were very tame and had lived there for years. They apparently had lived well.

''That will be *Bébé's* kingdom for as long as you will stay.''

But Madame must be going,—there were many things for her to do. I must install myself comfortably,—dinner was at seven,—and off she trotted, small and neat and clad in gray, like a bright-eyed busy mouse.

All of the high-strung heroism of the day before seemed to have left me in the night. I had dropped from my lofty heights and there was nothing left in my heart but a lonely longing for Philip.

What had he thought of me when he had read my letter? When would I see him again?

Well, I had done this thing of my own free will and I would have to be brave and stick it out for a little while, anyhow.

Meanwhile, it was time to dress for dinner. I must try and be punctual, so as to give dear Madame as little trouble as possible. When I heard the gong I slipped down-stairs, leaving Baby asleep, with door ajar, so that Annette would hear him if he woke and cried.

## CHAPTER XIV

### A PENSION DE FAMILLE

The parlor was full of inmates and presented the appearance of an aged ladies' home, with two or three old gentlemen to enliven the monotony. Two of the Fates were there,—one weaving (or knitting) and the other, yes, the other, was in the very act of snipping a thread with a pair of scissors. I hoped it was not the thread of some nice person's life.

They were all waiting for me with undisguised interest and they came forward and surrounded me—there must have been about twelve of them. Madame put a shielding arm around me and introduced me to them one after the other. I felt apologetically young. The fat old ladies smiled at me very sweetly. Some of the emaciated ones made frightful grimaces, intending to be pleasant. The old gentlemen hopped around gallantly, evidently quite pleased with me, and then, with one accord, they pushed into the dining-room with hungry alacrity.

Meals mean a great deal to aged people when they have little else to live for.

It was a motley circle around Madame's table, —tall and short, very fat, very thin and medium,—all of them pitifully wrinkled, some vertically, others horizontally,—derelicts from stormy, unknown seas. Most of them had outlived children, grandchildren and friends, some had been deserted by their families because they were impossible to live with, others had never had any people. Every face was turned towards me expectantly. They had nothing left to say to each other.

If you have accompanied Eve this far you know her to be as friendly as a puppy and something of a chatter-box, so I did my best to entertain my appreciative audience.

I talked to them of America and of my dear brother beyond the seas, recalling some of his adventures in the West for their benefit.

It is so very easy to interest very old people and it is wonderful how they respond to youth.

When the soufflé was brought in, a trifle burned, a low murmur went around the table, enforced by growls from the old gentlemen. The disturbance was quickly suppressed by nudges, but I could judge by this incident that Madame's boarders were not always amenable.

A stout old lady sat beside me and was very gracious. She was unmistakably a *grande dame* and her voice was as sweet as honey. I was much taken with her and hoped that she would be my friend.

When we filed out I let them all pass before me. The last one lingered behind the rest, put a detaining claw on my arm (she was the Fate of the scissors) and murmured in deep sepulchral tones: "Do not trust her. Every word she says is false, false! The truth would choke her."

It gave me quite a turn. Of whom could she be speaking? Surely not of the lame old lady with the honey voice!

This apparently peaceful retreat was evidently not always the haven of rest it appeared to be. It must have taken all of Madame's exquisite tact to keep harmony among these querulous old creatures whom fortune, fame, love and even death had overlooked.

When I reached the parlor my lame friend took me aside: "I saw Madame X—— talking to you just now, *mon enfant.* You must never pay any attention to what she says. She was disappointed in love fifty years ago and has never said anything kind about anybody since."

I was inclined to believe her, but I must be

very careful to be non-committal and enter into none of the feuds of this small community.

I settled down among them and listened with unfeigned interest to the stories of their youth, —those of their various ailments did not appeal to me so much.

Baby was a perpetual source of amusement to nearly all of them. He was such a good boy and never cried. They had much contradictory advice to offer me concerning the physical care of him. He must wear amber beads against croup. Whoever heard of any such nonsense! He should cut his teeth on a gold thimble; no, a rubber ring would be much more efficacious. He must wear woolen stockings both winter and summer; on the contrary, bare feet would prevent his ever catching cold.

Some of them had once had babies of their own (God help them!) and they strained their brains trying to remember the various details of their upraising. I thanked them all for their kind suggestions, but followed only Madame's advice.

Meanwhile, time slipped by with stealthy tread,—not really much time,—but the days and weeks seemed interminable as I waited for I knew not what.

## CHAPTER XV

### MOTHER

One morning, just as I had finished dressing Baby for the yard, Madame Vuro rushed into my room with a newspaper clutched in her hand.

"Quick, Eve, put on your hat and coat while I throw some things into your bag. Madame, your mother, has the pneumonia and you will want to go to her at once. A cab will be at the door in a few minutes. What a mercy it is that we have finished weaning Baby. Annette and I will take splendid care of him till you want him. The longer he stays with us the better we shall like it."

I felt as if a cold hand were clutching at my throat. My fingers mechanically pinned my hat on my head. I left my boy on the bed without a farewell kiss and my feet carried me downstairs, the little Madame bustling after me. Her words seemed to come from a distance: "You must be very brave, *Mignonne,* and trust in the good God. The paper says that your

dear mother has not been ill long. You can only help her if you have courage and self-control. Adieu, adieu. I will come and see how everything goes and bring Baby. A glimpse of him will cheer you. May God help and keep you all."

Madame must have paid the *cocher,* for I fled unmolested into the house and up the stairs to Mother's apartment. I rang the muffled bell and was admitted by Babette, shaking and trembling, a wreck of the wreck she had been before.

"Oh, thank God, Mademoiselle Eve, thank God, that you have come!" she sobbed. "Monsieur Philippe put it in all the papers. He said that one of them would surely reach you."

Then Philip came out of the salon, with tender pity in his eyes. He gathered me to his heart with his strong, protecting arms and I almost forgot my new anguish for the joy of seeing him.

"We still have a little hope. She is more comfortable, and, oh, Eve, how is our boy?" (His son meant more to him then than I had thought.) "We were expecting you dear, Jack Dorre and I. Your mother is not conscious, but she will be the better for having you near her."

I threw off my things and went into Mother's room.

In all of these years I had never known Mother to be ill. I had never heard her complain of ache or pain.

A little Sister of Saint Vincent de Paul was sitting by the bed, telling her beads, while Mother tossed and murmured incoherently.

I stood and gazed down at her with misty eyes. Even in the disorder of illness, she had none of the disfigurement of age. Her wonderful dark hair rippled on the pillow. Years had left their mark on her face; but in doing so had added to its strength. The unwonted droop in the corners of her mouth gave it a helpless pathetic expression, so foreign to her nature that I wept as I looked at her. The dark eyes glanced hither and thither, sometimes with the old merry twinkle and sometimes in fear. It seemed strange that such a look should come, even in delirium, to one who had never been afraid. Suddenly she sat bolt upright: "The clock, the little clock on the mantel-piece; it is on fire. Oh, quick, won't somebody put it out?"

Jack Dorre rose from a corner near the window (I had not seen him in the darkened room). He put his hand on the clock.

"It is out now, Mother; shut your eyes and rest."

Doctor Parmentier came in after a while. When he had finished his inspection and given the Sister some instructions, I slipped out of the room with him: "Tell me, Doctor, is there any hope?"

"I am afraid not, Madame. Pneumonia is very cruel and devastating to these strong vital creatures. Maybe it is the strength which they put into their struggle to live which wears them out the quicker. There seems to have been no reason for this attack, no run-down condition or especial imprudence. She came home from a round of visits in a cab two days ago and sent for me. You can imagine that she must have felt very ill to do that. She might have had a better chance if I had seen her a few hours sooner; but then, God alone could be sure of that. She probably was only fit for bed when she went out. She will soon regain consciousness and will want you first of all. She was asking for you continually yesterday. *A ce soir, Madame,*" and he was gone.

I did not allow myself to ponder over the Doctor's words. I felt instinctively that the mental attitude one must bring to the bed-side of the sick or even dying is hope. The intui-

tion of very ill people is so keen, and everybody who goes near them should be thinking, "You will get well. You shall get well!"

And so we all waited silently. Philip came and went, but seemed to be always there just when the doctor wanted to send for anything in a hurry. None of us exchanged a word which was not connected with Mother's illness; not one of us had a thought outside of her.

Late in the night her consciousness returned. She looked around the room with her quick keen glance, spoke sharply of several things which were out of place, and then her eyes rested on me and stopped:

"So you have come back, you little hussy!" she panted. "What right had you to almost break the heart of that splendid boy?"

"Mother, Mother, I only left him because I loved him and thought it was best for him to be free."

"Free! Fiddlesticks! He has the poor taste to prefer you to his freedom; besides, he happens to be fond of his son. You stick to him and see that you don't worry him like that again. He is too good for you, anyhow."

And then, against all laws of Nature, against all hope, Mother seemed to take a turn for the better. She came back to life just when she

was apparently going to die and her indomitable spirit refused to leave her body. When death was about to seize her she drew back impatiently and said, "No, not yet." I really believe that it was my sudden reappearance which gave her this new grip on life. She did not wish to go until she had seen me reunited to my husband.

For two days she deceived us all, all but the doctor who shook his head and looked grave; but he did not urge prudence, nor did he forbid us to talk. If we had known anything about death, we would have understood the significance of this apparent carelessness. A good physician is apt to let down the barriers of caution when he is convinced that the hours of his patient are numbered.

The sick room became again the scene of activity which Mother's pretty chamber had always presented. Meals were served to the three of us on a little table in the corner, so that Mother could see us and listen to us talk.

Champagne was opened in honor of my return and she moistened her lips with it. We drank to her health and rejoiced at her recovery. She did not speak much (her breath was very short) but her dark eyes followed us incessantly. We pushed her couch close to the window, so she could breathe the air which came

from the Bois de Boulogne and was ladened with country fragrance.

As I sat at the foot of her low bed the day after my return and Philip crouched on the floor beside me with his head against my knees, I asked him very gently to tell me of all that had happened on the day I left the Hermitage.

Mother seemed to be resting quietly and I knew that our low voices would not disturb her.

"Oh, Eve, how could you do it! I loved you with my whole soul, you always and you only. I thought you knew me well enough to understand that my love of Art was as much a part of my being as my love of you.

"I had finished the portrait of Olga the very day on which you left and I came home walking on air, proud of having accomplished my best work and thirsting for your loving praise. I rushed into the house, calling on the dear name which stands for my Paradise. Deaf old Mariette was busy in the kitchen and never heard me, and then I went in your room and found your note. I read it over and over, first stunned and then not even understanding when the words had penetrated my brain. The blow came out of such a clear sky. I did not even know that you had suffered. I had not realized that you were lonely or unhappy. I imagined that

your child was as absorbing to you as my work was to me. I sat down and thought it over and tried to be calm. There was plenty of time, as there were no more trains till morning. I knew, of course, that you had gone to Paris. I felt instinctively that whatever it was that had come between us would have to be handled very discreetly. At last, when my face was under control, I went to Mariette and asked her if Madame had gotten off comfortably. Would you believe it, the dear old soul did not know that you had gone. It helped me a lot to have to calm her agitation and I told her the story which I had prepared. Your mother had been taken suddenly ill. (How cruel is Fate to have turned that falsehood into truth!) You had gone to her in such haste that you had barely had time to throw some things in a bag, pick up Baby and catch the train. I told her how distressed I had been not to go with you, but that I had had to finish the portrait and would join you the next day. Mariette had no suspicions and was full of sympathy and questions which I did my best to answer intelligently.

"I then hastened back to Olga, as she was the only creature who could give me advice.

"Oh, Eve, you should have seen her when she read your letter! I did not know how great

was her heart. I had paid little heed to anything else about her but her beauty and often did not know what she was talking about, being more interested in the lights and shadows of her face caused by the movement of her lips.

"'My poor little Eve, my poor little Eve!' she sobbed. 'All alone with her baby in the great world! And you, you great fool, you booby, standing there like an imbecile, when you alone are the stupid cause of her trouble!

"'This thing which you call Art may be very beautiful and very wonderful, but not so beautiful nor so wonderful as the heart of one loving woman. Every time that I have asked you what your little wife thought of your raptures over my pink and white face and your absorption in the portrayal of it, you have answered me with the stupid arrogance of a male: "Oh, Eve? She understands. She is in the business. Besides, little as she is, she is much too big and fine to misconstrue anything that I do." There you are, you men, all of you Turks at heart. The women whom you honor with your love are to wait patiently at home for a kind word now and then while you go forth and are busy about other things. I knew that those long hours at home alone were not good for the child, while you stood or sat for as long as I would

let you with your eyes riveted on the beautiful creature who happens to be myself. Oh, don't think I did not understand you! You may imagine it has been fun for me to sit here lending you my face while our minds were a thousand miles apart. I am not used to men like you and I don't mind telling you frankly that I have been bored. What conversation is possible with a man whose heart is tightly locked up in a little strong box to which nobody but a chit of a girl has the key. Time and again I have been tempted to refuse any more sittings, but I have kept on for two reasons: one, that I have believed in the success of the picture and the other and best, that I wanted to bring fresh happiness to the little creature on the hill.'

"She stamped her foot now and then as she spoke and her angry eyes were not good to look at; but she promised to take good care of the portrait and ship it in due time to the Salon. She bade me good-by with a cold little wave.

"Then, dear, I went back to our desolate little home. Nothing in life is sadder than the empty rooms of one's past happiness. I put some things into my bag and sat and smoked my pipe all night as I pondered over the possible places to which you might have gone.

"The old station man sold me my ticket in the

gray dawn with a familiar, friendly question about the little Madame and I repeated my story for his benefit.

"I sat through the long journey thinking of the lonely little heart that had preceded me. I went over every month of our married life; I dissected my every thought and action and always, first and uppermost, sitting on the throne of my heart, nestled in the bosom of my soul, resting in every cell of my brain I found but you and only you.

"I did not need this experience to find out how much I love you. If I had failed you in any way I would humbly ask your pardon on my knees; but, Eve, I am the same Philip that first loved you and has never stopped loving you. You will have to trust me and accept my beauty-worship as part of myself and as a thing which could never infringe on my love of you."

What Philip said was what my heart had been telling me for weeks. No, he had not needed this bitter lesson; but I had. It was a miserable mistake and I was full of repentance; but I was not allowed to humble myself as I should. There was punishment enough for me in listening to Philip's account of his and Jack Dorre's long, fruitless search. He had first gone to Mother and she had given him a cot and much

advice. In her many conjectures about my whereabouts she had even mentioned Madame Vuro and then had abandoned the idea of my being with her as improbable. The morning of the day on which she had been taken ill she had again referred to Madame Vuro and Philip was about to go to Passy when Mother came home and needed his help.

"Yes, yes," came from the bed, "a good boy, a very good boy, indeed!"

Madame Vuro came in that afternoon with my baby just when Mother seemed to be dozing off; but she revived at the sight of him. He was very rosy and very bold and had something of Jack Dorre's native seriousness in his infant face. We sat him on the bed and Philip looked at him as if he had never seen him before. Nor had he, for there was nothing in common between this regal child and the soft featureless being of the Hermitage.

And then, poor Mother, who had lived a day longer than her allotted time, closed her eyes and went away. And the little Sister prayed.

At dawn, the next day, all was over and a great peace had come at last to the troubled spirit.

But what of us, Jack Dorre and me? How could we live and *do* and *be* without Mother.

After every one of our actions our first thought had always been, "What will Mother say?" And in every important event of our lives, "What will Mother do now?"

It was not that we were weaker or that we had less initiative than other people; but merely that we had been the children of a mother so strong, so fearless and so energetic that she had more or less absorbed our personality when we were with her. Now, we would have to rely on ourselves alone.

Philip had felt her influence from the first and had accepted it as a matter of course.

There we stood, the three of us, in many things as helpless as children. Our gruesome duties lay before us. There were so many things to attend to and we turned to one another, not knowing what to do first.

Oh, Mother, Mother, why were you not there to help us with the funeral! You would have carried it all off so well. There would have even been an element of pleasurable excitement and a return of that childish thrill which we always felt when you were about to give "a party."

Doctor Parmentier was very kind and business-like; the little Sister experienced in all things of the grave.

I don't know just when Madame de Lamotte arrived, for it seemed so natural that she should be there and take all of the responsibilities off our hands.

The third day found us at Père Lachaise, kneeling beside a fresh grave. We did not weep; no thought of Mother suggested tears, for she had always hated any display of emotion. We had a feeling of dull sorrow and regret for one who had gone, leaving a space and a blank which no human being would ever occupy again. When we rose from our knees Jack Dorre put a hand out to each of us. "It will have to be 'You two' and 'We three,' now."

Poor, dear Mother. She was ever generous and unselfish, but intolerant of meanness and stupidity. I know that now, in God's great universe, her many splendid qualities have found their own appointed sphere.

She is resting in Père Lachaise, surrounded, as she was in life, by clever people—near Alfred de Musset, not far from Béranger, in sight of the tomb of the Comte de Lamotte. Abélard and Eloise guard the entrance gate and Paris which she loved so well laughs and sobs at her feet.

## CHAPTER XVI

### CONCLUSION

I WENT back with Philip to our Hermitage, as a tired child goes home after having run away and been found. We traveled second-class this time. Philip carried the baby like any other loving father and I took charge of the bullfinch. Our faithful Mariette was at the station to meet us with her arms out for her baby. We were glad of Père Mathurin's springless cart in which we bumped up the hill.

The next morning the bullfinch sang for the first time since he had been away.

We took up our lives just where we had left off. A little wiser, a little sadder and more wistfully eager to please one another than before.

I would wake in the night with a cry: "Philip, Philip, are you there?"

"Yes, my dearest, and please God we will part no more."

Much as we love our dear retreat our flights to Paris have become more and more frequent as Philip's fame has increased.

How proud I was the year we had an Honorable Mention at the Salon! I say, "we," for was it not our boy who stood for the slim, brown Pan, in the picture? But prouder even than I was the old Comte de Bracy, who acknowledged gracefully that Philip's art was worthy of a capital "A."

The Château remained unoccupied for some time, till one joyous day it opened its doors again to receive back it own.

Friends of the de Lamottes had arranged most successfully a marriage of convenience, the fulfillment of which enabled Marie to return to the home of her childhood with her serious, kindly husband. No love-match planned in Heaven could have brought together two more congenial souls or united two hearts in deeper and more abiding affection. No marriage could have been more blessed with happier or more beautiful children who threw their chubby arms around the pink columns and kissed them "as *maman* used to do."

What more have I to say? Happiness is just a long, a beautiful story, to be lived, not told.

Little Philip is his father's shadow. He follows him around and tries to imitate him, with much waste of paint. He is nearly as tall as I am and will not call me anything but Eve.

I feel so small between my two great boys, and oh, so happy and so safe!

I live in the shadow of a genius and am content, for have I not lived in the shadow all of my life?

# EPILOGUE

I HAD thought that the story of Eve Dorre was finished—finished, at least, as far as my readers' interest was concerned. I wanted them to think of her till the end as young and fair and very slender, with, alternately, the dew in her eyes and the dimple in her chin, for mere youth is so dear and so irresistible to all. And then, when the book was finished, the first, the most vital thing happened in my life, the only thing, in fact, which was worthy of record:—the call of France to her sons to defend her and themselves and to conquer.

That is why I wish to add a few pages to my manuscript with a heart welling over with sadness and exultation.

Behold me no longer the tender, often lachrymose and yet merry child of my story, the little Eve whose life-motif appeared to be the song of a bullfinch; but a mature woman with a strong purpose, head high, lips compressed and throbbing heart. Our Philip has gone to the front. He is twenty, our Philip, and the little brown Pan has turned into a man. He is a strange

conglomeration and contradiction of all of us. He is neither artist nor poet, but unconsciously reflects the atmosphere of both. Above all, he is essentially a man, both strong and fearless. He has been athletic from his little boyhood up and his Polytechnic training has fitted him well to fight for his country. The first rumors of war found him full of eager enthusiasm and longing for the fray. When the great news came we were at the Hermitage, basking in the perfumed sunshine of our vineyard and feasting our proud eyes on the splendid son who had been away so much. It seems almost sinful to idolize a human being as we do Jacques.

There have been a few changes at the Hermitage since our early married days. A little wing has been added for Jacques and we luxuriate in a real modern bathroom. The outside ladder was turned into a stairway long since and the garret is now a spacious studio. Old Mariette has retired to her own home in the village, but crawls up the hill now and then to see that her niece does not neglect her work. An unpretentious car awaits our pleasure in the shed, holding in its little engine the marvelous power of revealing to us the highways and byways of our beautiful country.

The mobilization of France has made every-

thing else seem trivial. The old bitter hatred of the Prussians and the Uhlans is seething in every French heart and the passionate longing to get back what was taken away in 1870 renders each and all capable of fighting like heroes. Death seems to have no terror and the individual no longer counts. What is life or personal sorrow compared with certain victory?

I do not recognize in myself even a trace of the girl whose youth it has pleased me to recall. I attribute the whole change in my nature to what some might call the "bringing up" of my boy, though, as a matter of fact, as he stood at my knee in humble, submissive childhood, following the conventional words of the primer, it was he who was teaching me the great truths of life—patience, forbearance, toleration and gentleness. His young strength infused itself into my being. Like his Uncle David, he saw things as they really were—not as he imagined them or wished them to be—and I, living his life, watching over him with tender love, actually found myself developing under his fresh, boyish influence. Such things are not as uncommon as they seem. Many a woman has been made stronger and nobler by the influence of her children, only, as a rule, she either does not know it or does not care to acknowl-

edge it. For myself, I feel in my heart that it is the years of association with my son which have given me the strength and courage to be the mother of a hero. I use the word very simply and without vainglory, for are we not all the mothers of heroes just now, we mothers of the men of France?

Each man, each boy, is exalted and glorified by the singleness and fearlessness of his purpose. There is a valor and nobility in every young face as the men pass through the village by thousands, pouring in from other villages to the high road which leads to the frontier. Their brows seem to be cleared of all base or unworthy thoughts,—not a coward among them, as they march with laughter and songs and merry jests, knowing only too well that many among them will never return, and the mothers and sweethearts and wives cheer them, keeping back their tears till they are gone. All of us are proud to have men to offer to France, and it is only the childless woman and mothers of only girls who are sad and ashamed.

I dare not think of what the future has in store. Our boy is gone. He waved to us till he was hidden by the bend in the road and I stood there hand in hand with Philip on the hill, watching with dry eyes, thinking of the twenty-one

years of joy and pride and love that he meant to us.

We must hurry, for there is, oh, so much for us to do! Every available place at the Hermitage must be accommodated with a cot for the wounded, every cupboard must be cleared and filled with bandages and medicines. Our dear old Doctor Dubois is still hale and hearty, thank God, and ready for the fray.

The preparations at the Château are on a more extensive scale.

Marie, beautiful and noble as a medieval chatelaine, has seen her husband and only son off to the war and, with the help of her little daughters and her women, is working day and night against the arrival of the first sad home-bound trains. There is much that I am able to do with my strong hands at the Château.

Philip, on his side, is accomplishing incredible feats, thanks to the car which we have been fortunate enough to retain, because it is too heavy for military use. He runs it from dawn till dark between Cormatin and Macon. There are supplies that have to be brought to the stores from the city, not to mention lint and bandages and medicines and cots, and then there is a sick person now and then who has to be transported to the hospital in the city. All the other cars

are gone and not one horse remains, so Philip is indeed kept busy. We have little time to give to our thoughts.

At night, we all assemble in the great hall of guards at the Château while Marie reads aloud the most important parts in a book on "First Aid to the Injured." All of the women from the village are there and each one in turn is called upon to repeat her lesson, like a child, to prove that she has understood. And through all, above all, is heard the thundering of the cannons, the terrible cannons, in the distance, and we know that each shot may mean the death of some one whom we love. No words of sympathy are exchanged, for that would be disastrous, and the women wish to be as brave as their men. All is calm and well organized and even the weakest would be ashamed to weep.

My boy is over there, amidst the cannons and the guns—my little boy who was put in my eager young arms that far-off summer day, when the bees droned among the roses in the open window and the bullfinch sang his loudest and the world seemed too beautiful to be real, for I knew that he was the fulfillment of a great love.

Philip may also go to the front if he thinks he is needed. Then I would have to run the

brave car alone, back and forth, back and forth, between Cormatin and Macon. What does it matter? We are only units in this great, this awful war. Love, life, art, all, all, will have to go unless God wills otherwise.

I thank Him on bended knees that He has given me so much to offer to the France I love so well.

THE END